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a Plain Brown Wrapper edition

Viking Age

Roleplaying the Myths,
Heroes & Monsters of the Vikings

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Many of the original covers had artwork that was suggestive (or even provocative), so each book of the series is being reissued in a 'plain brown wrapper.' Text beginning at the Table of Contents and continuing through the page numbered 188 appears exactly as it was originally presented.

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Foreward

In 2001, Avalanche Press hired me to edit RAGNAROK! TALES OF THE NORSE GODS. Originally envisioned as a follow-up to the company's successful GREENLAND SAGA: THE LOST COLONY, "Ragnarok" focused more on the legends of the Viking gods. The book was an instant sensation, selling at a remarkable pace. Despite being the third RPG book the company published, it was the first to sell out.

In early 2002, a sequel, DOOM OF ODIN, hit store shelves. This book offered expanded rules for a Norse campaign and an epic-length adventure. Like its predecessor, "Doom" sold very well and only a few copies of it remain in the APL warehouse.

As we began preparing our 2003 schedule, we were looking for projects that we could give the "CELTIC AGE Treatment." In other words, we wanted a 192-page, super-complete mytho-historical setting. It didn't take us long to decide we should return to the world of Norse mythology.

RAGNAROK! TALES OF THE NORSE GODS is the most-often requested out-of-print book from consumers we have. GREENLAND SAGA: THE LOST COLONY is also out of print, and DOOM OF ODIN will be soon. Each of these books was nominated for an Origins Award. Clearly, people like Vikings.

Hence, VIKING AGE. Here was an opportunity to bring back into print material that people had been requesting for some time. It also gave us an opportunity to truly expand on what we'd done before, giving Vikings the deep historical treatment that had won praise in our other RPG books. Thus, VIKING AGE is, in many ways, "Ragnarok Deluxe Edition."

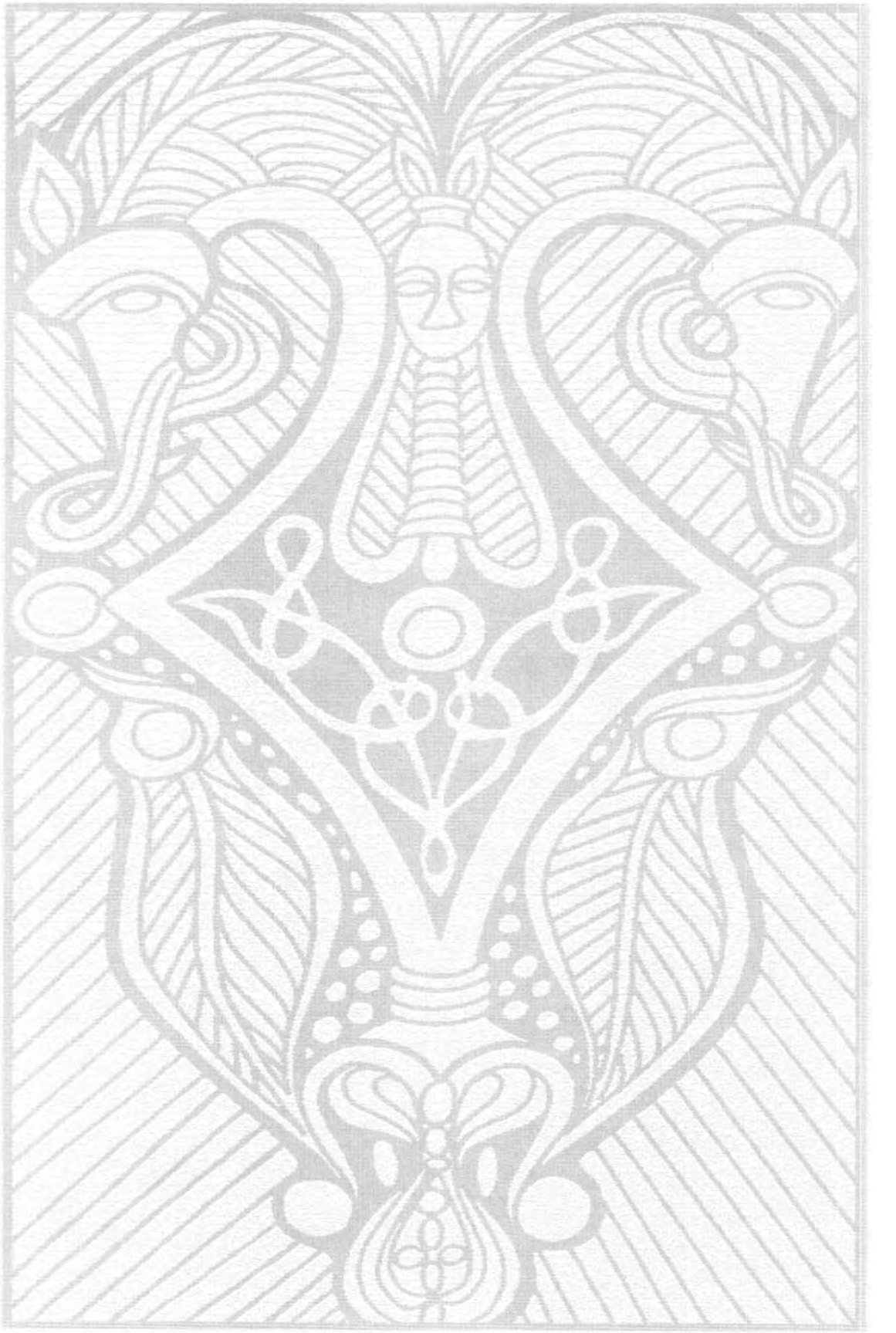
If you own those books, though, you'll quickly realize that this isn't just a collection of previously published material. There are many, many changes as a result of treating the Norse and their gods with greater depth. Gone is the fictional world of Midgard presented in "Ragnarok." It is replaced with the real earth and the beliefs of the people who inhabited it in the Ninth and 10th Centuries. While "Doom" featured extensive coverage of Jotunheim and Nidavellir, all of the Worlds of Yggdrasil are treated here.

You'll also find an historical and cultural study of the Viking Age (officially 793 to 1066 AD). This is an exciting period of history, and there are many opportunities for adventure. VIKING AGE gives you a look at how Vikings lived, whom and how they fought, and what they valued. The legends of their gods are detailed as well as the terrible prophecy of Ragnarok.

As usual, there are numerous new rules designed to accurately recreate the period. VIKING AGE features eight new character classes, a host of new Skills and Feats, and other setting-specific rules. All of the major gods are presented in detail for inclusion in your campaign. Like in RAGNAROK! TALES OF THE NORSE GODS, players can take the roles of both mortals and gods.

The Viking Age is a period rife with adventure, and your party can now cross swords with fell giants in an attempt to stave off the eventual doom of Ragnarok. We're very pleased to not only have some of this material back in print but to offer a whole new world in which for players to adventure. May your raiding parties find great plunder, and may you have the strength to defeat frost giants and the cunning to outwit Loki.

John R. Phythyon, Jr.
Lawrence, Kansas
June 2003



Chapter 1
Norse Mythology

VIKING AGE explores not just the history and culture of the Norse people but also their myths and beliefs. Despite the attempts of overzealous Christian missionaries to destroy pagan culture, a great deal of the Norse mythos survives to this day. It is one of the best-known legends in the Western world. However, it is largely tragic and rife with injustice. This chapter introduces you to Viking belief, placing you firmly within their world.

History

The mythic history of the Norse is rich and complex. It can be roughly divided into four basic time periods: the mythic far past (during which the universe was created), the mythic near past (during which the current order was established), the mythic present (during which most of the gods' adventures occur), and the mythic future (when Ragnarok occurs and the current order is destroyed). VIKING AGE is set in the mythic present, when it may still be possible to prevent the future cataclysm.

The Creation of the Universe

In the beginning, there was a formless void known as Ginnunga Gap. Here, heat and sparks from Muspelheim met cool moisture from Nifleheim. These combined and formed a proto-giant named Ymir. At this time, the proto-cow, Audhumla, emerged from drips of rime right after Ymir, who is nourished by the milk from her udders.

As he slept, Ymir sweated. In this way he created a male and a female, and they became the progenitors of the frost giants. Audhumla fed herself by licking salt blocks. In three days, Buri, the first of the Aesir emerged.

Buri had a son named Bur, who married the giant, Bestla. They had three sons, Odin, Vili, and Ve. Thus, the giants and the Aesir are tied by blood. However, Odin, Vili, and Ve killed Ymir, thereby murdering a family member. Ymir crashed to the ground and squashed most of the giants his children spawned. The rest drowned in his blood. However, a giant named Bergelmir and his family got away, setting the stage for the epic conflict between gods and giants.

The three brothers took Ymir's body to Ginnunga Gap and formed the world from it. They created the earth from his body, the seas from his blood, and the heavens from his skull. Maggots that ate Ymir's flesh became the svartalfar (dark elves).

Rise of the Gods

The gods began to establish themselves throughout the cosmos. Two separate groups arose — the Aesir (warrior gods) and the Vanir (nature gods). Each contributed to the universe. Frey, of the Vanir, created the liosalfar (light elves) and placed them in Alfheim. The Aesir created human beings and gave them Midgard on which to live. At the base of the world-tree, Yggdrasil, Mimir created a well that contained the wisdom-giving alcohol, mead.

During this time, Odin became obsessed with knowledge and wisdom and went on a quest in search of it. He drank from Mimir's Well, and he hung for nine days on Yggdrasil so that he might gain knowledge of the runes and how to use them. Later, Freya would bring sejdr (spirit magic) to the gods, but, aside from Odin (who had grown very wise), only women could use it. There is some evidence to suggest, though, that this is because the men did not see it as a noble practice and so left it to women. Whether this is the case or simple jealousy over their inability to use it is unknown.

But as the gods flourished, so did their enemies. Bergelmir sired two races of giants — the frost giants, who lived in Jotunheim, and the fire giants, who lived in Muspelheim. These races hated the gods for the murder of Ymir, and plotted to destroy them. The feelings would only become exacerbated by the frequent thefts the gods would make from them.

The Aesir-Vanir War

In the mythic near past, the Aesir and Vanir went to war. The motive for this conflict is not exactly clear, but it was the Aesir, led by Odin, who attacked. They found out quickly that the Vanir, despite being nature gods, were skilled at warfare. This war is thought to be the first meeting of two armies in the universe.

Eventually, it became obvious that a truce would have to be reached. Thus, the Aesir and Vanir exchanged hostages, which in medieval times was understood to be sending insurance. The "hostage" was treated as an honored guest in a show of good faith by the host. In the same fashion, some of the greatest warriors were sent over as hostages to show faith by the opponent. If one party reneged on the deal in some way, the other was allowed to kill or keep the hostages.

The Vanir sent Frey and his father, Njord, to the Aesir, who in turn sent Hoenir (who was supposed to be a great leader) and Mimir (who was very wise). The Vanir were initially pleased with this arrangement, and made Hoenir a chieftain. However, he proved incapable of making any decisions without Mimir's advice. If the latter was not present, he would simply say, "let others decide." Feeling, they had been cheated, the Vanir beheaded Mimir and sent his head back to Odin. However, Odin kept the head and listened to the whispers of wisdom it gave him.

Several important things were accomplished by the war. The most important of them was the rise of one unified group of gods. While the Aesir remained in Asgard and the Vanir in Vanaheim for the most part, the two groups essentially became one and ruled over the universe. Freya taught *sejdr* to the Aesir, and the Vanir were banned from committing brother-sister incest, which had been their custom but was not tolerated among the Aesir.

Ragnarok

The Doom of the Gods is foreseen in a vision by Odin. He only understands a little of what it means, and he hopes that it can be prevented. The sequence of events is thus:

Frigga, Odin's wife, obtains a vow from all things not to harm her son, Balder. However, she overlooks mistletoe. Loki learns of this weakness and fashions a spear from the wood. One day, when the gods are having sport by attacking Balder so that he may demonstrate his invulnerability, Loki gives the spear to Balder's blind brother, Höd, and encourages him to participate in the fun. In this manner, Höd accidentally kills his brother.

The gods punish Loki by torturing him and binding him to a rock. However, he eventually escapes. Here, he turns on the Aesir once and for all, and joins forces with the giants and his three monstrous children — Fenris, the wolf, Jormungander, the Midgard Serpent, and Hel — against the gods. They attack Asgard, catching the gods by surprise. Loki fights Heimdal at the gate, and the two kill each other in the process.

Odin leads his forces into battle, but he is killed by Fenris early on. Vidar avenges him by killing the wolf. Tyr battles Garm, the Hound of Hel, and both die in the conflict. Thor confronts Jormungander and at last slays the giant serpent with his hammer. However, the Midgard Serpent's breath is poisonous, and Thor succumbs to it. Frey battles the king of the fire giants, Surt, but he falls.

Surt then releases a conflagration that consumes the world. Everything burns and the seas rise and all of the gods' creation is swept away.

Afterwards, though, there is a rebirth. Balder returns from Nifleheim and is reconciled with his brother, Höd. Vidar and Vali survive the holocaust, as do Thor's sons, Magni and Modi. Human beings also appear in the aftermath and Balder helps them build a new world of peace and prosperity.

The Order of the Universe

There are essentially two kinds of stories that take place in the mythic present of the legends. Either the gods steal treasure from the giants, or the giants attempt to steal treasure from the gods and fail. Thus, the order of the universe is very clear: goods flow from the giants to the gods; never in reverse.

This applies to women as well. It is perfectly acceptable for male gods to mate with female

giants, whether this be via a dalliance or a marriage. However, giant men are not so privileged. They may not wed or couple with goddesses. In the rare occasions that they attempt to do so, they are ultimately defeated.

The story of Idun's kidnapping by the giant Thjazi is an illustrative example. Idun possesses the golden apples that keep the gods young. When Thjazi gets hold of her (and her apples), the gods suffer. They age and are in danger of dying. When Loki rescues her, order is restored and the gods grow young again. Thus, it is bad for the gods (and against the natural order of things) for giants to gain women from the Aesir. It is right and proper, though, for the gods to take anything from the giants, such as when Odin steals the Mead of Poetry from them.

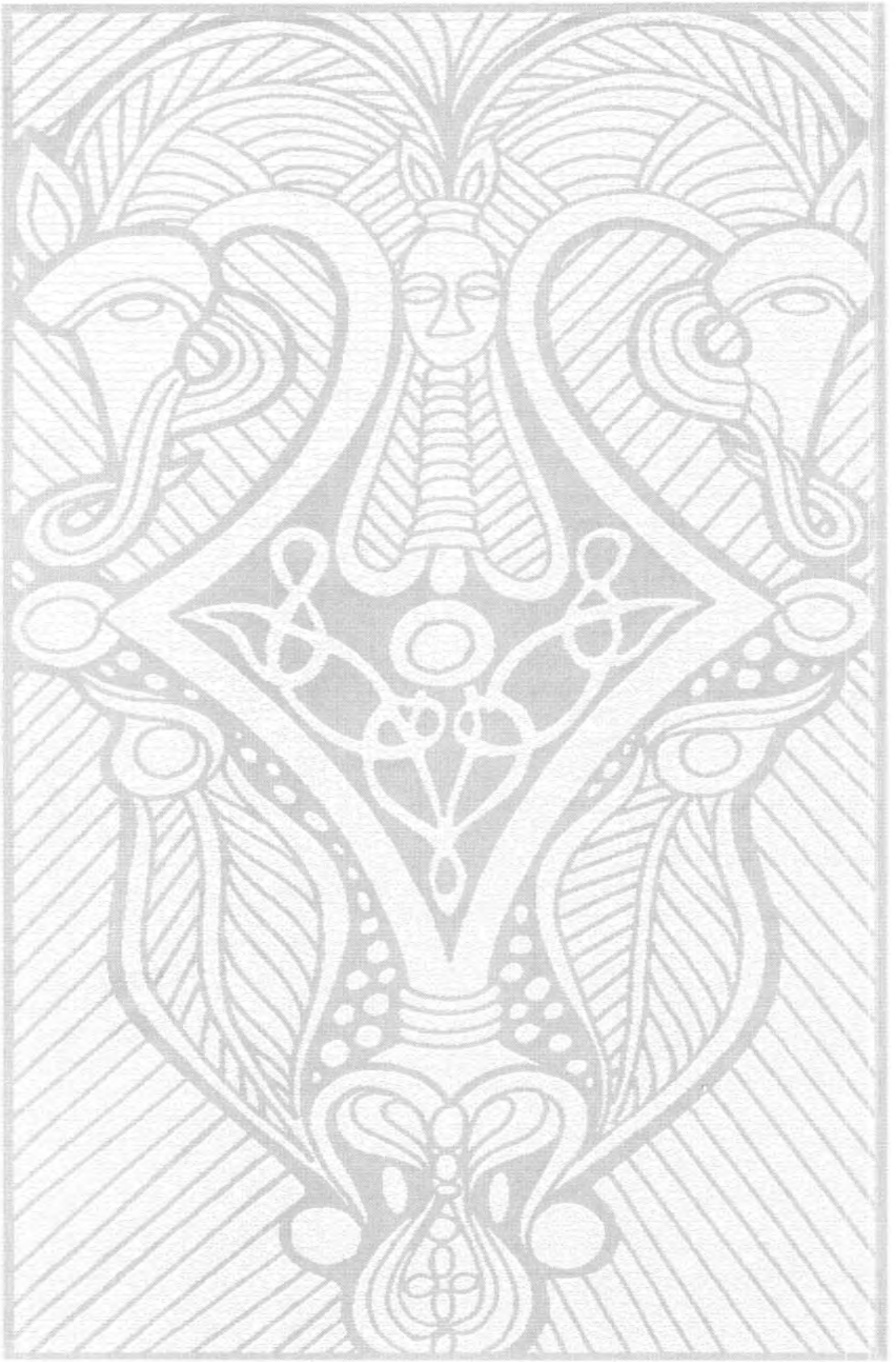
It is easy to understand how Ragnarok comes about in this context. The gods like to play that "might makes right" by stealing from the giants when it suits them. However, they also promulgate a law of order and honor that seems to fly in the face of their practices. They aspire to be better than they actually are, and they often place those aspirations on humanity, demanding that mortals live up to their ideals when they cannot.

This makes the order on which the universe is founded fundamentally corrupt. It can only be a matter of time before it destroys itself. That this order is further founded on patricide (since Odin killed his maternal grandfather, Ymir), makes it even more corrupt, especially when the law of the Aesir demands that when a person kills a family member, he or she must in turn be killed. Thus, it is only right that Odin eventually die for his crime.

The death of Balder brings things to a head. Balder is killed by his brother. The law demands that he be killed too. However, for Odin to do so, he has to kill his son, perpetuating the cycle of crime. He eventually skirts this issue by fathering a son, Vali, from Rind, but he does so in reprehensible fashion. In one story, he rapes her. In another, he uses sejdr to seduce her, which is a disgusting tactic from a male view. Thus, he further creates corruption to try to solve the problem, which only makes it worse. And the vengeance that the gods take on Loki seems to turn him against them forever, encouraging him to help the giants finally bring an end to things.

The Campaign

VIKING AGE, though, presumes that this can somehow be prevented. If the characters are heroic enough and aspire to the ideals of the gods, they may be able to avert the coming catastrophe. The campaign focuses around the characters going on quests to fulfill the mission of the gods and stave off Ragnarok. If they succeed, the universe might yet be saved. If they fail, they may well be responsible for the Doom of the Gods.



Chapter 2
The Norse World

Vikings are a product of their world, a harsh northern climate that forgives few mistakes. For reasons that are now unclear they suddenly stretched out to prey on the weaker peoples they found around them. Just as suddenly, they stopped. No one is sure why the Viking Age ended, either; while some cite the adoption of Christianity as a reason, monsters like Milosevic and Karadzic have mouthed Christian phrases in modern times and acted far more barbarously than any Viking.

Early Days

The Scanii, the primitive people of the southern Scandinavian peninsula, had been known to the Romans as a barbaric and violent people. They rarely left their homeland, instead waging violent clan warfare against each other.

This changed during the Age of Migration, the centuries from 400 to 800 AD when peoples began to move across Europe. The reasons for most of these mass movements remain unclear 1,500 years later. Whatever their reasons — overpopulation, desire for Roman goods, or defeat in battle at home — the people known as the Goths left central Sweden in about 400 AD. They split into two groups, with the Ostrogoths settling in modern Poland and the Visigoths in modern Romania. When the Huns appeared off the plains of central Asia, the Gothic peoples moved on, the Ostrogths to Italy and the Visigoths to Spain. But little other interaction took place.

The tribes did not use the Roman name for themselves, instead adopting what other German people called them: Northmen, or Norse. Norsemen fought each other for centuries, but, in 793 AD, they became Vikings. The word comes from the Norse, "vik," which literally means bay or harbor. A band of Norse would "go a-vik-ing," hiding their small ship in a bay or port and darting out to attack a passing merchant.

Norse life began to change as Europe changed. In the Eighth Century, new commercial centers began to develop. Seaside towns became larger and wealthier, with trade connections often reaching many hundreds of miles. The Christian Church also became wealthy, founding monasteries that extracted the agricultural potential of the surrounding farms through the labor of their monks and intimidation of their neighbors.

Norse ships participated in this trade. Sailors saw this growing wealth and brought word of these developments back to their homelands. Rich targets had grown up across the narrow North and Baltic Seas. It was there for the taking.

Lindisfarne - The First Raid

793. In this year terrible portents appeared over Northumbria, which sorely affrighted the inhabitants: there were exceptional flashes of lightning, and fiery dragons were seen flying through the air. A great famine followed hard upon these signs; and a little later in that same year, on the 8th June, the harrying of the heathen miserably destroyed God's church by rapine and slaughter.

—The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle

In 793, a band of Norwegians sailed across the North Sea and struck the monastery at Lindisfarne off the northeast coast of England. Whether they'd picked the target out beforehand or just sailed around until they found a likely set of victims is unknown.

Lindisfarne had been selected in 635 as the site of a monastery founded by Aidan, an Irish monk from Iona. Twice daily the tides separated the "holy island" from the mainland, and the monks used it as a base to evangelize throughout the northern part of England. Though Christianity had come to Britain with the Romans, it had fallen into a minority status behind the pagan beliefs of the Saxons who invaded in the Fifth Century. The monks restored Christian beliefs among the Celts and brought their faith to the Saxons, and Lindisfarne became a revered holy place under

the guidance of its saintly bishop, Cuthbert.

The Vikings stormed ashore to meet no resistance at all. A few monks tried to interpose their bodies before the monastery's sacred relics, but laughing Norsemen quickly put these interlopers to the sword. Some monks escaped to the mainland and fled, but others fell victim to Viking humiliation, as the Norsemen stripped them naked and made them race for their amusement. Some they tied up and threw into the sea to drown, while the most priggish were forced to watch while the Vikings urinated on their holy scriptures. After they'd loaded the monastery's treasures, the Norse sailed away and left a smoking ruin behind them.

Because of its wealth and easy access, Vikings continued to raid Lindisfarne for another eight decades. Finally, in 875 AD, the surviving monks decided they'd had enough and fled, carrying the coffin of their holy St. Cuthbert. For another 120 years they wandered around England, carrying the coffin as they went, before ending up in Durham.

The Lindisfarne Raid echoed across Christian Europe, with the Church's network spreading word of this atrocity far and wide. Priests offered prayers of protection from this new threat, and bishops demanded that local rulers take precautions. But the raid had this effect only because it struck at a Christian site and took Christian wealth. King Offa of Mercia, the nearest local ruler, had already ordered preparations against seaborne raiders a year earlier. And three years before, Norsemen killed one of the king's officials, but it's not clear whether this was the result of a raid or a simple argument.

Early Raids

A whole series of raids against coastal monasteries broke out over the next five years, implying at least some consensus on this plan of action and a scouting report. Monasteries held portable wealth — precious stones and metals. Nowhere else in the world of the Early Middle Ages could a Viking be sure of finding such items, having to be content with taking food, clothing, and farm tools instead (and, of course, slaves).

Lindisfarne was unusual because, judging by the chronicler's account, the monks were unarmed. At many other monasteries, this was not the case. "Fighting monks" would appear shortly to battle the Vikings, but even before the raids began, most monasteries had armories, and the monks practiced at arms. Not all peasants gave up their tithes willingly, and the monks sometimes had to offer more than the Word of God to get their share.

These early Vikings struck two more English monasteries, but most attacks went elsewhere. Vikings hit the great monastery of Iona, just off the Scottish coast, three times in 10 years. The same year they first hit Scotland (795), other raiders struck Ireland and the Isle of Man. A few years later, they attacked several Welsh monasteries, burning the buildings after looting them.

Most raiders came from Norway or Denmark, following local chieftains who also picked up individual Vikings looking for some loot. So while the bulk of a crew might come from one small area, they often included a handful of freebooters from elsewhere. Mixed crews of Danes, Norwegians, and Swedes sometimes made the trip across the North Sea.

In 799, Vikings hit the European mainland for the first time, using their ships to elude land-based Frankish forces and attack unprotected coastal villages and monasteries. Vikings also sailed up rivers in what would become modern France, staking out bridges as sites for ambushes and knocking off convoys of merchants.

The Great Raids

During the early years of Viking raids, the German Emperor Charles the Great (Charlemagne to later French historians) held power over much of Europe. A great warrior and formidable organizer, though illiterate, Charles built the largest empire Europe had seen since Roman times. He set up what became the feudal system, with lesser lords subject to his will holding local power. Relying heavily on the church for officials — probably less than two dozen non-clerics in all of Europe could read — Charles did not intend the lords' positions to be hereditary. They had different ideas.

The emperor died in 814, passing the crown to his son, Louis the Pious. Charles had left his son's upbringing to the ever-present circle of churchmen that had surrounded his court, and now Europe paid the price. Far more interested in saving his soul than his empire, Louis ignored his responsibilities to devote himself more fully to prayer. The warrior lords had no respect for their leader and began to fight amongst themselves. When Louis died in 840, he split the empire three ways, and his three sons immediately began to war with one another. Local civil wars erupted as well, as nobles named their positions hereditary and fought to carve out their own petty dukedoms.

It took a few years for the Vikings to recognize their opportunity, but, when they did, the attacks on Europe reached a new level of intensity. No longer did single ships cross the seas for petty raids: now whole fleets, organized and led by kings, sailed out to take booty. In 844, a Viking fleet attacked Portugal and Spain, clashing for the first time with Islam. The Muslims of southern Spain proved formidable warriors, but a Viking band managed to capture the capital of Seville. A Muslim counterattack killed most of the Vikings, and they slipped back down the Guadalquiver River past banks festooned with their comrades' hung corpses.

In 851, a Viking assault on Seville came to grief along the Guadalquiver again, as the Moorish cavalry quickly rallied to stop the Vikings short of the city. They did manage to burn several mosques in coastal towns before retreating but came away disgusted at the Islamic refusal to decorate their places of worship with gold and the difficulty of finding alcohol to loot.

A Swedish chieftain named Bjorn Ironside led 62 ships on another attempt in 859. They made some coastal raids in Spain, but they had larger prey in mind. Bjorn's fleet passed into the Mediterranean Sea and spent the winter in what would become the French Riviera. The next year, the Vikings sacked Pisa and what they thought was Rome — the much smaller Italian city of Luna. Bjorn led the way into "Rome," faking his own death and beguiling the locals with tales of his deathbed conversion to Christianity. When they opened the city gates to admit him for a proper Christian funeral, he leaped up and began gleefully cutting down the gullible Lunans.

On the way back, the Moors were waiting. Bjorn lost forty ships fighting his way past the Strait of Gibraltar, as the Muslims deployed the secret weapon known as "Greek Fire," a form of napalm (see LAST DAYS OF CONSTANTINOPLE from Avalanche Press). They hauled the Viking wrecks ashore and used them to build a splendid new mosque in Algeciras dedicated to their victory.

Settlement

A generation or two after the first raids, Vikings became dissatisfied with merely taking goods from their victims. These people lived in a much softer and fertile land than their Scandinavian homes. It did not seem fair at all that such weak little people should hold such fine lands. And so the Vikings began to take them.

Being traders by nature, they did not simply eject the locals but bargained with them. Local rulers ceded land to the Vikings in exchange for the Vikings not raiding them and protecting the locals from other bands of Norsemen. A Dane named Harald made the first such bargain in 826, taking a piece of Frisia (modern northwest Germany) in exchange for protection. In Ireland, the Vikings first spent the winter there in 839 and two years later established a permanent settlement, apparently without asking anyone's permission.

In these early settlements, Vikings sometimes summoned their wives and children from home but more often took new ones from the locals. Many Norsemen found a liking for the submissive nature of Christian women as opposed to the confident and forward manners of their own female relations. They raised the offspring of such unions as Vikings, and mixed-breed Vikings proved just as bloodthirsty as their fathers.

In the first decades of the Viking Age, raiders set out from Scandinavia and returned there for the winter. This took up at least two months of their raiding season and also required them to sail home during the most dangerous time of the year. In 850, things changed when a Viking force stayed in England through the winter and

began pillaging again come spring. By the middle of the 800's, Viking raiding forces rarely came from Scandinavia, but instead staged out of bases closer to their prey — Normandy and Russia being favored locations.

In 860, a huge band of Russian-based Vikings (Swedes and their Slavic henchmen) attacked Constantinople herself. They plundered and burned the Orthodox monasteries and suburbs outside the walls, but could not get into the city. With the Byzantine army away on campaign, it seemed nothing could stop them until the Orthodox patriarch dipped the robe of the Virgin Mary into the sea and carried the relic around the walls. Repelled by the robe's holy force, the pagans fled in stark terror (in the Byzantine version of the story, anyway; in the Viking version a hefty bribe did the trick).

Vikings liked raiding, but, as time had passed, they developed stronger social organizations. Jarls began to take firm authority over the local hersirs, and kings slowly became truly royal figures (though still having to earn their place with axe and sword). This organization in turn needed operational cash, and some Viking leaders discovered that it could be funded much more easily through extortion than through raiding. Simply threatening death and destruction brought them gold, silver, and sometimes even slaves. By 865, Viking chiefs were regularly demanding "Danegeld" in order not to attack, and usually getting it. Of course, paying one band of Vikings was no guarantee against attack by another; though for more money the first group might consider fighting the second.

In 866, Viking strategy changed again. The largest Viking fleet yet seen, led by a Danish king, landed in eastern England bent not on plunder but on conquest. Over the following decades they carved out a kingdom in northeastern England known as the Danelaw — the region where Danish law held sway. The Norse Kingdom of Jorvik (York) stood up to almost a century of Anglo-Saxon attacks until its last ruler, Erik Blood-Axe, fell in battle in 954.

Other Vikings took kingdoms of their own. The Orkney Islands north of Scotland became a Norwegian jarldom, held by the crown until the middle of the 1200's when a cash-poor Norwegian king sold them to Scotland. Likewise, the Isle of Man fell under Norwegian rule as did much of Ireland.

Exploration

When Vikings weren't busily killing people and taking their stuff, they also built a formidable reputation as explorers. Christianity discouraged seeking new lands — after all, if humanity was meant to know about a place, God would have put it in the Bible. Seeking lands not mentioned in the Holy Word was literally unthinkable to Christian Europeans.

Vikings felt differently and knew that unsettled lands existed. At some point in the early 800's (just when is unclear) Vikings began to settle in the Faroe Islands between Norway and Scotland, which were, at that time, uninhabited. Several legends grew up to explain this settlement: that seasick Vikings had been abandoned there or that a community seeking freedom from royal oppression escaped to the islands. Whatever the impulse, they found the soil no worse than Norway's, and they began a thousand years of raising sheep and catching fish.

Probably about the same time, Vikings landed on the Orkney Islands off the northern tip of Scotland. They soon became a valued base for raids on Scotland, England, and Ireland; their strategic position remains into modern times, and they've hosted the Royal Navy's main fleet base since 1914.

If there were local inhabitants — the record isn't clear — the Vikings quickly became the predominant culture and either drove them off or assimilated them. They preyed on Norwegian as well as other victims, and so in the late 800's King Harald Fairhair installed his follower, Sigurd, as jarl. The jarls ruled the islands for another four centuries but always under the king of Norway. Great leaders like Sigurd, the Stout (killed at Clontarf) and Thorfinn, the Mighty extended their sway over northern Scotland, the Hebrides Islands, and parts of Ireland. Orkney never asserted its independence, and jarls of Orkney fought alongside their kings at the climactic battles of Clontarf in 1014 and Stamford Bridge in 1066.

The Vikings didn't discover Iceland, but they soon made it their own. Celtic Irish monks seeking solitude and fleeing the oppressive Roman version of Christianity settled on the island in the Eighth Century. They called the island, "Thule," and built a handful of small settlements.

Naddodd, a Norwegian, spotted the island after being blown off course between Norway and the Faroes. He and his crew explored part of the eastern coast but found no settlements. They named the island Snowland (Snaeland in Norse). Gardar Svavarsson, a Swede, heard the news and sailed to Snaeland to learn more. He and his men circled the island and built the first Norse settlement there, Husavik. But the next settler leader, Floki Vilgerdarson (also called Raven-Floki) gave the island the name that stuck. When he returned to Norway, many more settlers took up the mission, and Iceland soon became a part of Norway. The Vikings killed, enslaved, or chased off the Irish monks but imported many Irish slaves to work their farms. Iceland remained a stronghold of Norse culture, and much modern knowledge of the Viking world comes from Icelandic sources as zealous Christian missionaries worked hard to exterminate the old ways in Scandinavia itself.

During the last decades of the First Millennium, Viking adventurer, Erik "The Red" Thorvaldsson, sighted the massive, snow-covered island of Greenland. Erik, considered rough and violent even for a Viking, had a bad habit of killing people and being banished for the crime. First he had to leave his home in southern Norway, settling in Iceland. It wasn't long before he got angry and killed again and had to depart his adopted home. Not allowed to return to either place for three years, he set sail for some islands an earlier seafarer had spotted west of Iceland

Erik and his comrades found a large landmass with inhospitable, rocky shores. Sailing around it, they came to a series of fjords similar to those of their Norwegian homeland. Though Greenland is mostly known for the massive ice-cap covering almost all of the island, some areas experience warm summers and sport pasturage for livestock and contain small groves of trees. The Norse arrived during one of the Earth's periodic warm spells, and so the climate was less harsh than the 21st Century and certainly an improvement over Iceland. Erik's naming of "Greenland" represented an early form of real estate promotion, but he did indeed see green lands. Meadows could support sheep and cattle, and the nearby seas teemed with fish, seals, whales, and sea cows. Norse settlers came to this new land and set up colonies that endured for almost 500 years. And then they disappeared. Just what happened to the Greenlanders is still disputed.

Erik's son, Leif, is well-known for sighting America, known to the Vikings as Vinland. Christian writers claimed he sailed to Norway first to be baptized by Norway's first Christian king, Olaf Tryggvason. This is doubtful, and, more than likely, the first Vikings to sail to America were devout pagans. There is evidence that his mother, Erik's wife, did adopt the religion and built a church in Greenland.

Around the year 1000, Greenlander Bjarni Herjólfsson spotted land to the west of Greenland. Leif bought Bjarni's ship and found three new lands. The first was covered with flat stones, and Leif named it "Helluland" (probably modern Baffin Island; Norse iron mines were found there in the 1570's and confirmed later). They sailed on and stopped at a land with very tall trees that Leif called "Markland" (probably Labrador or Newfoundland).

The third land, called "Vinland," was rich in game and seemed to have good soil for raising crops. Wild grapes were also listed, touching off a centuries-long debate on Vinland's location. Leif's brother, Thorvald, was killed on a later expedition when a Uniped shot him with an arrow. The Greenlanders went to America for centuries to obtain timber (unavailable on their island), furs, and other items, but could not maintain permanent settlements for long in the face of Indian opposition.

The Colonies

In some areas, Vikings at first ruled and then melded with the local people. The three most famous and successful locations were Russia, Normandy and England.

Viking Russia

Swedish Vikings probably raided the Slavic peoples living in what today is Russia, but these fairly primitive tribes had little worth taking. What they did have was access to a river network leading all the way to the Black and Caspian Seas. Viking ships could, with effort, be portaged (dragged) over intervening land obstacles, and, over the years, the Swedes penetrated ever deeper into Russia.

Around the year 830, they first reached Constantinople, known to them as "Miklagard," the Great City. They traded with the Greeks there and also with Arabs. The Eastern World ran on slave power, and the Vikings brought them many captives for sale. Furs, timber, and amber also moved south in exchange for luxury goods.

The center of this trade was Novgorod, a wooden-walled city in northern Russia. Many Swedes lived there, but it also had a large Slavic population. The Slavs called the Swedes "Rus," a Finnish word. According to Russian legend, the Slavs became desperate for leadership and begged the Rus to govern them.

Reluctantly (or so the legend goes), three Swedes took up the call. Rurik became ruler of Novgorod, Sineius of Belo'ozero and Trevor of Izborsk. The other two soon died, and Rurik became ruler of all Russia, conquering Kiev as well.

Whether Rurik actually existed or not is unclear, but his successor, Oleg, did exist and moved the capital to Kiev in 882. Kiev became a powerful trading state under a succession of wise rulers, but it had little organization and little purpose beyond enriching its ruling class through trade. The princes served more as leader of an organized crime family than a royal court.

The Kievan Rus became ever more Slavic, intermarrying with the locals and adopting their language, but even the last Great Prince, Yaroslav the Wise, was sent home to Scandinavia for "education" (essentially, a youth of looting and pillaging). Yaroslav brought Christianity to Kiev but divided the realm among his sons, and Russian unity was lost. When the Mongols arrived in the 13th Century, there was no powerful state to offer them opposition.

Normandy

Danish Vikings preyed on the rich farmlands of what would become northern France, which had very few coastal defenses. Raiders burned Rouen in 841, and, in 851, they spent the winter nearby before sacking Paris. The Franks built fortified bridges over the Seine River to protect Paris from Viking fleets, but the raiders simply pulled them down.

King Charles, the Bald paid them Danegeld, but this was only partially successful. Finally, in 911, Charles, the Simple gave the Viking leader, Rolf, the Ganger (Walker), the land that became Normandy. Viking settlers poured in, and Rolf (Rollo to the Franks) became Normandy's first jarl. By 1000, the ruler was stylizing himself Duc, using the French title, and his people drank wine rather than ale or mead.

The Normans, the result of Viking-Frank intermarriage and assimilation, proved highly energetic. They continued their raiding ways, and masses of them went to Sicily and Southern Italy to found a kingdom there. Others crossed the English Channel with their Duke William, the Bastard in 1066 to conquer England.

England

Vikings raided England early and often — it was nearby, and its political divisions made opposition to attacks difficult. The Norse began to settle in earnest in the mid-800's, and King Alfred, the Great of Wessex did his best to drive them out. Alfred defeated the Viking "Great Army" on the battlefield in 878 but had to concede the independence of the "Danelaw" in northeastern England. This Kingdom of Jorvik (York) endured until 954.

In the year 1002, the Saxon King, Aethelred, the Unready, decided to try some ethnic cleansing, ordering the murder of all "Danish" males in England. Among those killed were the brother and sister of King Sven Forkbeard of Denmark. Vowing vengeance, Sven came to England with an army, burning and plundering Aethelred's lands. But he was too effective — his army faced starvation, and he returned to Denmark.

After years of raiding, Sven returned in 1013, this time determined to conquer England and

install his son, Canute, as king. Starting with the old Danelaw, he quickly overran the country and Aethelred fled to Normandy. But Sven died the next year, leaving young Canute in charge.

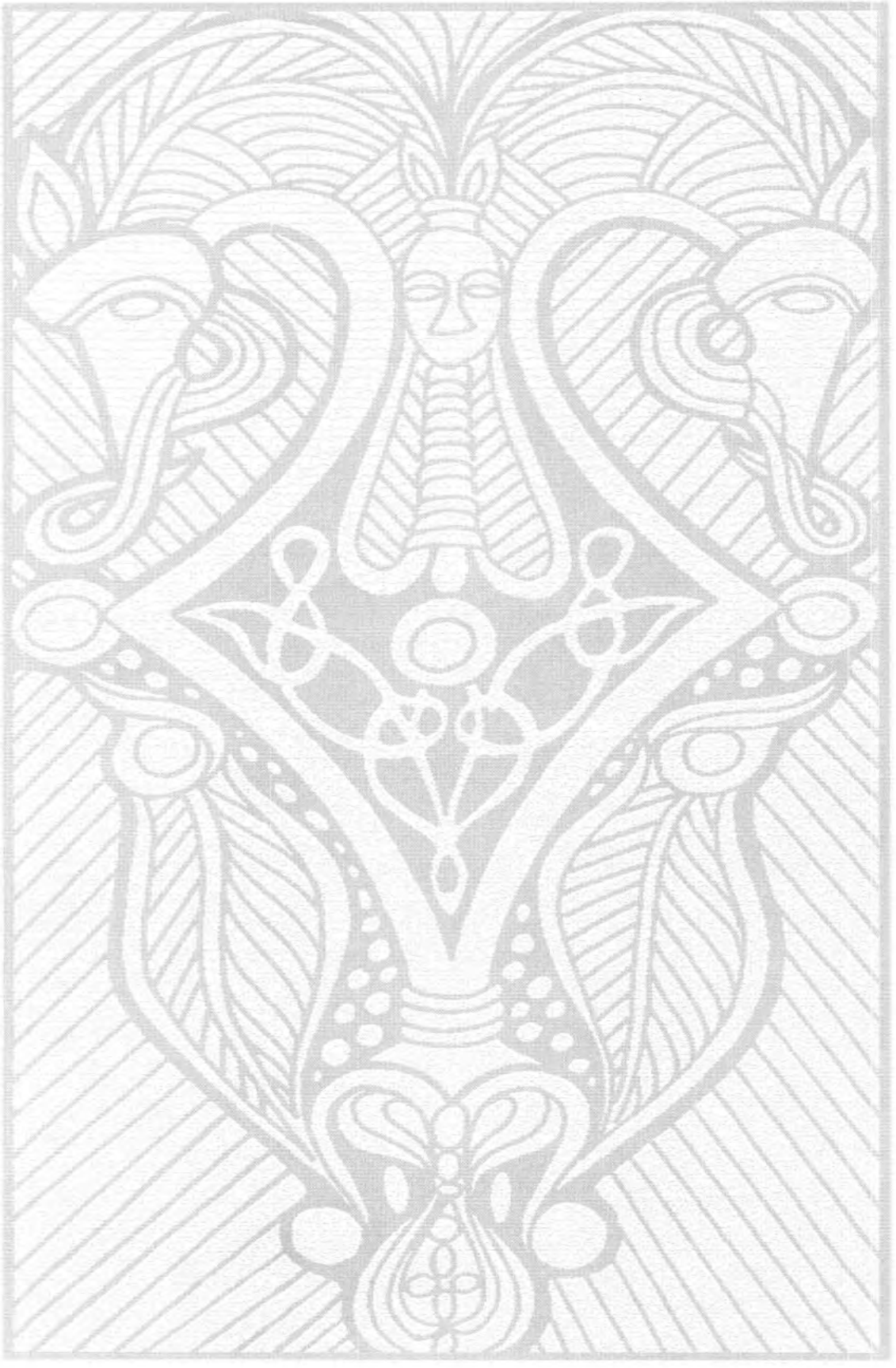
During the same year, 1014, Vikings from across the northern world journeyed to Ireland to confront the Irish High King Brian Boru. The Norse lost, and their kingdom around Dublin was wiped out. Refugees flooded into England, increasing the Norse character of the northern regions. These men also provided needed reinforcement to Canute's army, as Aethelred had returned determined to reclaim his crown. Aethelred soon died, but the threat remained.

Canute defeated Aethelred's son Edmund in 1016, then struck a bargain dividing England in half. Edmund died almost immediately afterwards, and Canute claimed all of England as well as Aethelred's widow. He had two children by her and two more by a mistress, but this could not secure his dynasty.

People kept dying conveniently for Canute. In 1018, his brother, Harald, passed on, leaving the Danish crown to Canute. In 1020, he took the Norwegian throne by force, and, a few years later, Scotland anointed him king as well. He ruled a North Sea empire and began to work feverishly to consolidate its unity.

Canute is best known, though, for his legendary order stopping the tides from rolling in, and he had no more luck forging a united state. English trade soared with the realm protected from Viking attacks (a side benefit of the united thrones), and Canute worked to bring his different peoples together, doing penance for all of their sins against one another.

Before this could bear fruit, he died in 1035, aged only 40. His sons showed little ability and all died young without leaving heirs. By 1042, Canute's line was gone, and Aethelred's son Edward became king. A relative, Harald Hardraada, unsuccessfully tried to re-forge the union in 1066 but lost the Battle of Stamford Bridge. It would be another relation, William of Normandy, who would take and hold the crown.



Chapter 3
Norse Culture

What makes a people distinct is its way of viewing the world around them, and the Viking perspective is unique indeed. While they are a Germanic people, they retain the old pre-Christian ways without the centuries of Roman and Greek influences on their German cousins. They are barbarians in the purest sense of the term.

The World, Viking Style

Vikings believe the world, Midgard as they call it, is flat. It is roughly circular, though not perfectly so, bounded on the west by an endless ocean, on the north by fields of ice, and on the south by a burning desert. To the east, the cold lands of "Greater Sweden" stretch on and on until one comes to a range of mountains (that will one day be called the Urals). Beyond these mountains, the world ends according to some; others say this is where Asgard lies.

Yet unlike other people with a finite view of the world, the Norse feel driven to explore their universe. There are adventures to be had, strangers to meet and trade with or kill (or both), and new places to see. The people they meet are different, but not necessarily inferior. Vikings are willing to grant them equality — to marry them, fight alongside them, fight against them with honor and accord them protection of Norse law — if they are worthy. The Norse are a practical people and "worthy" usually translates as "meets the Vikings' interest at the time to find them so." Vikings have no problem settling among other people and mixing their culture with the local one as long as the Viking ways are predominant. Over time, the Viking percentage of this combined culture usually fades. Viking foods and other comforts often pale alongside other Europeans', and the Norse take to these new ways quickly.

Cosmic Balance

Norse thought holds that the universe is in constant struggle between order and chaos. As long as order prevails, existence will continue, but if the balance should tip toward chaos, there will be an end to all things. Since order must triumph at all times but chaos need win only once, the Norse believe that there is a "fatal destiny"; all must come apart eventually, even the gods themselves. Ragnarok is not merely a story of battle, but a metaphor for the fate of the entire universe. No matter how valiantly humanity struggles to make things otherwise, all of its work turns to dust.

This stark outlook drives Norse life. Life is not a struggle between good and evil but between order and chaos. Their view of "good" is not the same as that of Christian and Christian-derived Western cultures. One can be a murderous, raping, pillaging Viking yet still be an upholder of order and thus "good." Likewise, one can be gentle and loving, by Western standards very good, and challenge the nature of society. By promoting chaos, such a person would be the equivalent of "evil"; Vikings on encountering a paragon like this will put him or her to a slow and painful death, then congratulate themselves on their own "goodness" for upholding order.

This balance has much to do with the Norse view on Christianity. They scorn Christians as weaklings who do not uphold the warrior ethic, but their uneasiness with this religion goes much deeper than that. Thinking Vikings (no contradiction in terms) well understand the Christian reverence for Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus brought a message of love and understanding and, moreover, one of social change. A class warrior, Jesus challenged the very underpinnings of Roman society, and his followers bring the same danger to the northern European world.

By the time of the Vikings, this last message has been heavily adulterated, and Jesus has been turned into the instrument of privilege rather than a beacon of hope for slaves and the oppressed. Yet the social danger remains. To preach of Jesus is to preach chaos and therefore

Alignment

The Norse concept of order and chaos is important to keep in mind when selecting an Alignment for your character. Choosing a Chaotic Alignment sets the character in opposition to the world, to the gods, and, really, to life itself. Chaotic Alignments are, in many ways, more evil than Evil ones.

To be sure, an Evil character is still a fiend in need of dispatching, but a Neutral Evil and a Lawful Evil character is far better than a Chaotic Evil one. The Lawful Evil character may be reprehensible in his or her behavior, but at least he or she understands the important of maintaining law and order. Neutral Evil characters may be right bastards, but they're not interested in seeing the end of all things.

Of all the Alignments, Chaotic Neutral is the most offensive to the Norse way of thinking. Such a person is only interested in the destruction of the universe (whether he or she knows it or not). Things must proceed according to a certain order, and the Chaotic Neutral individual blatantly works against that idea. Chaotic Good characters have some hope for redemption, but they are still fools who must be shown the light before their good intentions screw things up for everyone.

Choose your Alignment carefully. Generally speaking, check with your GM before you give your character a Chaotic one.

evil. The Celtic monks who first introduced Christian concepts to the Norse still clung to the older vision of a peaceful, gentle faith rather than the Church Militant of Rome. Vikings find this "kinder, gentler" Christianity far more abhorrent, and enthusiastically treat missionaries to the "red martyrdom" many of them actively seek. Not content merely to kill them, Vikings are so repulsed by the message that they subject Christian clergy to tortures like the "blood eagle," slitting open the victim's back and pulling out his or her lungs to watch them flap helplessly.

Vikings also dislike Islam, though not as deeply as they hate Christianity. Islam at least preaches a warrior ethic, but it too has a disturbing message of social change. And the ban on drinking alcohol is almost as disturbing to Vikings as circumcision. Huge Vikings have been known to faint when told of this procedure. Norse converts to Islam are pretty much unheard of, and, when faced with Muslim demands for forced conversion, no Viking would choose to live a life with a mutilated penis and lack of alcohol. Vikings rarely encounter Jews but have many of the same feelings toward them. Judaism is also a peaceful religion, but at least it is innately conservative by Norse understanding and allows drinking. However, the Norse respect Arabic trading prowess and do a great deal of business with them at trading grounds along the banks of Russian rivers.

Law

Upholding order means strict adherence to a stern set of laws. The laws are passed down orally from generation to generation; remembering them is one of the few uses of older men in Norse society and spares them the obligation of seeking an early and glorious death.

When laws are broken, the accused is brought before an assembly known as a *thing*. The *thing* is made up of all adult men of the community and also makes decisions for the community's well-being. As jarls and kings develop and gain power, the *thing* retains its legal function but advises the ruler rather than making laws itself.

At the *thing*, a designated lawspeaker spells out the crime and the relevant laws. Each community usually has one lawspeaker, an older man revered for his knowledge. A panel of witnesses, called a *kvidr*, tells the thing their version of the truth. As each witness speaks, he or she must hold "Tyr's ring," a totem sacred to Tyr, the god of law. If the witness lies, Tyr will strike him or her dead on the spot or, worse, damn the liar with a bitter life and inglorious death.

The Norse despise liars, and false witness is quite rare, though, of course, being human, what the witness saw is not necessarily what took place.

There is no "prosecutor" or "defender"; the lawspeaker's job is to tell the *thing* what the law is, not to try to apply it to the case at hand or sway the audience one way or the other. The *thing* decides how serious it believes the charges to be, and selects from its members a jury. This usually has 12 members, but for very serious crimes a jury of 36 or 144 will be named. In unusual cases, those involving magic or women's issues, the *thing* includes the community's adult women and all or most of the jurors chosen will be female. Women are rarely placed on purely criminal juries, as the Norse believe them far too quick to find guilt.

The jury then meets privately to discuss what it has heard and renders a verdict. The concept of democracy is alien; all must agree on the consensus. If they find the accused innocent, the procedure is over. Most crimes, including murder, are punished by a fine with the price payable to the victim or his or her survivors. If the crime is held to be against the entire community, the criminal may be declared an outlaw, one living outside the community and protection of its laws. An outlaw can be hunted and killed just like an animal, raped, or abused as the finder sees fit. Rape is the only crime meriting a death sentence, though later jarls and kings will add crimes against the crown to the list.

Some laws are universal, but others known as by-laws (literally, village-law in Norse) apply only within the community. Outsiders are not protected by the law, however. One may rape, rob, and murder non-Vikings to his or her heart's content. And many do, torturing and abusing their way across Europe. Those outside the bounds of the law are seen as less than human, and it is simply not possible to commit a crime against them.

Despite Norse disdain for Christianity, some Christian practices will begin to spill over into Norse culture during the Viking Age. The Christians taught the Vikings about ordeal by fire, an idea whose cruelty and barbarism greatly appeals to the Vikings. The accused must reach into a pot of boiling water, extract an iron bar and walk with it for nine paces. Afterwards, his or her hands must show no blisters or scars. If the accused passes this test, he or she must be innocent. A variation is fire-walking, in which red-hot iron bars are laid out on a course 12

Tyr's Ring

This is a sacred Magic Item that is presented to a witness at a thing. The witness must hold the totem while giving testimony. If he or she lies while holding it, Tyr takes great offense and punishes him or her. The character immediately must make a Fortitude Save at DC 25. If it is a failure, the character takes 3d6 points of permanent Constitution Damage. If this reduces the character to 0 Constitution score or less, he or she dies instantly. If not, he or she falls to the ground and is horribly withered from the experience. Life is hard after that since everyone knows him or her to be a liar.

If the character makes the Saving Throw, he or she takes no damage. However, the ring burns him or her, forcing the character to drop it in pain. He or she thereafter acquires a permanent -4 penalty to all dice rolls. Additionally, the character suffers a -10 penalty to the Charisma check to determine if he or she had an heroic death or a cowardly one (see Chapter 9).

Caster Level: 7th

Prerequisites: Discern Lies, Divination, Forge Ring

Market Price: 32,000 gold

Weight: negligible

Note: The damage that the ring inflicts has nothing to do with the ring itself. This all comes from Tyr. The construction of the ring employs spells solely designed to get his attention for the thing. He does the rest.

paces long and the accused walks slowly across them while barefoot. In this case, the feet must remain unscarred for three days afterwards in order for innocence to be proven.

Personal disputes are usually solved by a duel. In order to duel, one of course must be legally able to bear arms. The gods will assist the combatant with a just cause, and so the winner of the duel is proclaimed the winner of the legal suit as well. The fight is usually with swords and shields, and is fought until the first drop of blood hits the ground (not merely the first wound). The one whose blood drips first loses.

A duel is a private affair, not a spectator sport. While Vikings like blood and gore, a personal dispute should be settled personally. The duelists are taken to an isolated spot, preferably a small rocky outcrop in the sea or a lake or a secluded forest glen. They fight and report back to the community on its resolution. If they reach an agreement before or during the fight without bloodshed, that is their business and no one else's. If one duelist is killed, his or her family may demand compensation since a duel is not supposed to be to the death.

Slaves and lower-class Norse, of course, cannot resolve their disputes in this fashion, but no one cares what they think anyway. Women can participate if they are allowed to bear arms; they must be young and unmarried, with their father's permission to go to war. Married women who develop rivalries therefore often resort to more brutal methods of gaining satisfaction, quietly stabbing or poisoning or consulting a glytha in hopes of bringing pain to their enemies. Because they are denied full access to Norse methods of satisfying one's honor, Norse women commit the majority of murders in the Viking world.

Duels

A duel is to first blood. However, "first blood" is not the first person to bleed, but the first person whose blood hits the ground. Thus, if a character is involved in a duel, taking damage first doesn't necessarily mean he or she has lost.

Every point of damage a character takes brings him or her closer to losing. When the character gets hit, multiply the number of points of damage taken by three. Then roll d%. If the result is equal to or less than the number generated (3 x the damage taken), blood hits the ground, and the duel is over. If not, it continues.

At the beginning of each round, both characters roll again (against all damage taken). If either character hits the number or less, his or her blood touches the ground. If both have their blood hit the ground, both characters make an Initiative roll. The character who wins, wins the duel. If neither character's blood hits the ground yet, the duel continues.

Cash and the Economy

The Norse know the concept of money but use it rarely in dealings between themselves. They prefer to trade by barter and consider themselves (and rightfully so) master merchants. Vikings bring back all manner of goods from their raids, but enriching themselves is not always the goal. Many simply bury the coins and precious objects in holes in the ground and then head out the next season to raid again.

Late in the Viking Age, the unit of currency will be the *riksdalar*. Minting coins will come fairly late to the Norse, and they use all sorts of foreign currency. Even Chinese golden pagodas have ended up in their hands, though not before passing through many intermediate stops. The Vikings also chop precious objects (usually Christian crucifixes and chalices) into handy pieces of roughly equal value and use this "hacksilver" as a medium of exchange. Some hacksilver is actually gold, but it's always called hacksilver.

When trading with foreigners, the Viking trader will seat himself on the ground opposite the other merchant. Both will usually share alcohol to emphasize their friendship. Then one will hold up an object, and the other will indicate

interest by slowly placing pieces of hacksilver on the ground in front of him or her. When the price reaches an acceptable level, the first trader reaches out and collects it. Then the second trader holds up an object and the process repeats itself; sometimes no hacksilver actually changes hands by the time the trading is done

Trading is highly respected; while it can't get you into Valhalla, Vikings look up to someone who knows the art of the deal. Merchants are usually warriors as well, and those who are very good at business are thought to have strategic gifts and are often selected to lead armies. This is not always true, and some Viking armies have come to a bad end through this practice.

When approaching a foreign place, Vikings often are undecided whether to attack or attempt trade until the last moment. The difference lies in their strength estimate of the town or village: if the Vikings believe they strong enough to overwhelm the defenders, they attack. If they think they might be defeated, or that it will be a close fight in which they will suffer losses, they'll offer trade instead. Thus, the Vikings can salve their egos with the claim that they never intended to attack a strong village but always meant to trade with the people there.

Trade items are widely varied. From their own lands the Vikings bring dried fish, timber, amber, and some agricultural products, but they pick up all manner of items from trade and raiding and then turn it over in new trades. A Viking trader can hold up just about anything imaginable when offering a deal.

Class and Gender

Norse live in large family groups, occupying a central farmstead with a large "long house" and perhaps some outlying, smaller farms connected to the central one by ownership and by a lack of some facilities only available at the long house (barns, shearing sheds, bath houses and such). The inhabitants instead walk to the central farmstead to use these. Three or more generations typically live together, with the eldest son of the current generation leading the family and taking titular ownership of the farm.

A woman's place in the northern world is subservient to her closest male relative. However, women are held to have jurisdiction over what are seen as women's issues, and men do not interfere. Only a jury of women can condemn a woman to death for improper use of magic, for example.

But if a woman takes second place to her husband, in the ruling classes at least it is a strong second place. A farmstead's mistress is in charge of the livestock and slaves (these being pretty much interchangeable in the Norse outlook), and stands for her husband while he is away. However, if he is killed she loses this elevated status, and she is expected to kill herself at his funeral.

Norse stories include numerous strong female characters. For example, Erik, the Red's daughter, Freydis, is said to have driven off a host of Skraelings (probably Micmac Indians) singlehandedly. According to *Erik's Saga*, she bared her breasts to show contempt for her enemies and went berserk, the mystical state of Norse battle-madness, before slaying countless foes. However, another saga claims that Freydis' madness consisted of murdering most of her own party with an axe while they slept.

While Norse women do not often go about armed or participate in hunts, the Vikings are disposed to accept armed female adventurers. They will accept a woman's leadership if she is of the proper family line but are not likely to easily follow a foreign woman. To bear arms, a woman must be young and unmarried and have the permission of her family head. She will be expected to put aside her weapons, marry, and raise a family in a few years.

Norse women usually marry between the ages of 12 and 15. Many if not most brides are still pre-pubescent when first bedded by their much older husbands. The Norse like sex very much and feel it unnatural to wait too long to begin. In this age, both boys and girls reach puberty at a later age than will be the case a thousand years hence (15 or 16 being common, but an 18-year-old boy whose voice hasn't broken isn't unusual). This does not stop Norse girls from sexual activity (though their enjoyment of it is open to question).

Marriage is seen as an alliance between two

families, a situation very common in the rest of the world at this time. Marriages are arranged by the families' elders, and the girl definitely has no say in the matter; often the groom has very little as well. One family's head asks another's for the hand of a daughter, a bargain is struck, and the new bridal pair is informed of the decision. A young woman may ask her father (or head of family) to arrange a marriage with a particular man, and this request is usually honored.

A bride must be provided with a dowry of useful objects — tools, cloth and a bed. In the upper classes, dowries also include precious metals, jewelry, livestock, and lands. The property does not pass to the new husband but instead remains that of the woman until she either dies or obtains a divorce. In case of death, the inheritance passes to her children and, if there are none, back to her family. A husband cannot inherit the property of a deceased wife.

Both men and women can obtain a divorce on the grounds their spouse is unfit — fails to live up to his or her duties (not providing for the family or failure to perform chores adequately) or for sexual reasons (one can divorce a spouse with poor love-making skills). The procedure is simple: in front of witnesses, the partner seeking the divorce stands at an appropriate location (the front door, the shearing shed, the kitchen area) and declares his or her spouse incompetent at performing his or her duties there. The angered party then moves with the witnesses to the bedroom (if the home is large enough to sport a separate sleeping area), where the spouse is declared a poor lover. The marriage is then dissolved, the woman returns to her family and takes her dowry with her. Small children go with a divorced mother, while older ones are divided between the parents in a miniature sort of draft with the partner from the richer family choosing first.

The Poor

Norse society is class-based, with the poor occupying a marginal status and subject to the whims of their betters. It's a hard life in the northlands, and, like modern game publishers, many exist just on the knife-thin border between survival and starvation while others are already doomed but refuse to acknowledge their own demise.

Part of the Norse obsession with death is the constant threat of starvation — better to die with sword in hand than curled up with a swollen belly. Even the rich sometimes starve, and, when food is short, the poor go without first, even before the domestic animals.

In the later Viking period, some leaders will recognize the potential power of mobilizing the free poor — those men with just enough status to bear arms but too poor to afford weapons. Men who would be king like Olaf Tryggvason use these people to their advantage, supplying them with weapons and shields. This brings the leader their gratitude and loyalty, for having brought them to a respectable status is a great gift. Now these men who looked forward to dying shamefully in bed (or more likely, while lying in some pigsty or gutter) have the chance to fight and die gloriously and perhaps to salt away a little loot for themselves.

Slavery

The Norse keep slaves, known as *trälarna* (usually rendered in English as "thralls"; singular is *trälar*), who are no better than property and have no legal rights whatsoever. *Trälarna* are bought and sold, and carry about the same price as a sheep (less than that of a cow): three *riksdalar* in the later Viking period. A royal-quality slave (a strong, healthy young man or beautiful young woman) is worth 12 *riksdalar*. They can be killed or raped with impunity — there is no legal penalty for killing a slave, but, if the *trälar* belongs to someone else, the slayer must pay for the damaged property.

The child of a slave retains slave status, becoming the property of the mother's owner. Should the mother be sold while pregnant, the child becomes the property of the new owner. If the father is a slave and the mother free, the child becomes the property of the father's owner, but in practice this is often difficult to prove as the mother will usually deny that her child was fathered by a slave to protect the baby from such status. Some women will make the claim falsely,

though, if seeking vengeance on a free father.

There are other ways by which one becomes a slave. Slaves are despised, and so thieves (considered one of the worst possible criminals, given Norse trustfulness) are often sentenced to slavery. This is considered far worse than simply putting the miscreant to death.

About 20 percent of the Norse population is slave. They eat poorly, are frequently beaten, and die young. It is a highly unpleasant life, and they are known to kill themselves fairly regularly — throwing themselves into the sea, rushing at enemy troops or wild beasts in hopes of being killed, or simply lying down and refusing to live. The Norse have many inventive tortures to keep their slaves alive since, in these conditions, they must devise fates worse than death to keep their hold over the *trälarna*.

Vikings also bring back prisoners to become their slaves, and this is the best source of healthy *trälarna*. Strong young men and attractive young women are the most lucrative targets, either for sale on the raiding party's return or for personal use. Most often, the new prisoners are sold so that the money obtained can be most easily divided among the party; contention over slave ownership is a common cause of adventurers falling out among themselves, and, when Vikings disagree, they settle the issue with steel.

Female captives can expect to be raped repeatedly; all members of the raiding party will "mark" the conquest in this manner. The Norse do not approve of homosexuality and so anal rape is rare, but they will beat male captives savagely. Both of these acts (rape and beating) are quite calculated; though Vikings are violent enough to do these things without any added incentive, they are trying to break the spirits of their new slaves.

A small minority of slaves fall into property status by volunteering for it. These are people so desperate that, rather than starve to death, they locate a wealthy landowner and ask to become his slave. Volunteers have no more rights than any other slave: the owner may decide to kill them right away and will feel no remorse for doing so. Volunteer slaves are the most despised of the lot, and even Vikings who don't own them feel compelled to add a few extra kicks whenever they pass one.

At the top of the slave hierarchy are royal slaves, those owned by a king or jarl. These are usually better fed and treated and are the pick of the slave population — the youngest, healthiest and most attractive. They can still be killed out of hand but only by the ruler himself.

Most slaves perform hard manual labor: farm work or carrying heavy loads in construction or shipbuilding projects. Some are used for domestic work, caring for young children or for cooking and cleaning. Some Viking rulers keep lovely young women as sex slaves, but this is frowned on by Viking wives who usually find an excuse to put a dagger between the young woman's ribs. Some young women simply kill themselves on the approach of a Viking raiding party because they know their fate will be rape, beatings, and then an early death at the hands of a jealous wife.

Norse women are usually in charge of overseeing slave labor, and most are quite cruel about it. While they will kill female slaves themselves, they usually call on a Viking warrior to dispatch males for them. They administer beatings themselves unless they want it to be particularly savage, in which case they call on a stronger male friend or relation to perform this deed. Viking men are always happy to help out in this regard.

Slaves may own no property and may not even touch a weapon; a slave who does so, even accidentally, must be put to death instantly. In terms of value, slaves are seen alongside the best domestic animals (pigs and horses) and thus are fine sacrifices for the gods. The Norse practice human sacrifice fairly regularly, but they don't view this the same way later peoples will. To ritually murder a slave is not to kill a human being but to give the gods a valuable piece of property. To their way of thinking, Vikings don't practice human sacrifice at all.

If a slave escapes, whoever captures him or her is entitled to one-third of his or her value — the same traditional reward for finding and returning a wandering farm animal. Escaped slaves are sometimes put to death and some-

times merely tortured, depending on the needs and mood of the moment.

Slaves are sold privately between owners and sometimes gambled away. There are also slave markets in which professional dealers buy and sell humans. A good slave is not overly expensive, thanks to the massive supply brought in by raiding parties, and just about any well-off farm family can afford one or two. Slaves do come with a warranty against criminal behavior (the new owner can return the slave if he or she steals) but not against illness since it's impossible to tell if the death was caused by disease or bad treatment.

Death and the Viking

Some other peoples claim that the Norse worship death, and, while this is not literally true, neither is it completely incorrect. Death is seen as the climactic event of a person's existence, and everything beforehand simply leads up to it. The goal of one's life should be to end it with a glorious death.

A good death is one found in battle, hopefully against overwhelming odds while saving one's comrades. Many Vikings manage to find one, and, as they grow older, some become ever more frantic in their search for an end in battle. To get one to Valhalla or garner respect from the survivors, the death must be earned; leaping in front of enemy spears without protection or impaling yourself on an enemy's sword does not count as a good death.

There are times when suicide is acceptable, more often for women than for men. A warrior badly wounded and surrounded by enemies will kill himself rather than be taken captive, and, if his wounds are severe enough to have stopped him from fighting, then this is judged a good death. A man overcome with grief who kills himself is rarely judged to have died well. One can also commit suicide to spite one's enemies and evade capture (thus denying them the glory of killing you), and sometimes a leader will kill himself out of remorse for bad decisions or outright incompetence.

A good Viking woman kills herself when her husband dies. Norse widows are rare and usually scorned for the dishonor they've shown their deceased mate. There are exceptions: a glytha married to a fallen warrior rarely commits suicide because to do so robs her village of her skills. And a young and beautiful woman with many childbearing years ahead of her is expected to remarry.

The preferred method of Norse suicide is a dagger to the heart; they'd use a sword but few have arms long enough to accomplish this feat. One should see death coming and not take an easy way out like poison. While Norse widows will fling themselves into a funeral pyre, such behavior is actually fairly rare. Some will drug themselves, lie down, and burn to death alongside their mate's corpse, but this is frowned on and considered cowardly, excusable only by extreme grief.

Funeral pyres are reserved for those of great honor, with the greatest honor of all being a burning ship or large boat bearing the deceased to Valhalla. While bad movies of a later era will show these pyres being allowed to float out to sea, in reality the ship is dragged ashore to be set on fire. Otherwise, the pyre has an alarming tendency to gutter out and leave the deceased scorched but intact.

Next in line is ritual burial, in which the Vikings leave the dead with weapons and other accessories for the afterlife. Most dead Norse end up heaped in common graves or tossed into the sea, however. Those lacking honor are thrown into cesspits when they die, but this is considered an insult reserved for *trälarna*, criminals, and game reviewers.

While the Norse have a very definite view of an afterlife, it does not encompass physical resurrection of the earthly body (a belief held by some Christians of this period). If selected to carry on at Valhalla, Odin will restore a person's body in Asgard. Therefore, it's not a problem to incinerate a Viking's body, and the fact that a corpse lies rotting in the ground does not mean the warrior who once inhabited it isn't happily drinking, wenching, and fighting in the afterlife with a brand-new body.

Chapter 4
Norse Life

Vikings are best known for "going viking" ("raiding" in Norse), but their daily lives make them distinct from other people. Viking ways are unique, and you aren't a Viking if you don't follow them. After all, historians stop calling the Norse who settled in Normandy "Vikings" when they start drinking wine.

Food

Norse culture is one based on the idea that food shortages are a perpetual hazard of life. Thus, the one who controls the food supply has great status, and food is a symbol of power. The head of the family is the provider of food and hands out rations in a highly ritualized manner. His wife, the farmstead's mistress, must ration out food during the winter and oversees its preparation and storage.

The mistress also has a symbolic role in managing the food supply. Where the man of the house gets his symbolic power from his sword, the woman gains hers from the keys to the food supply she wears at her waist or around her neck (whether the farmstead actually has locks on its storage rooms and chests or not). The Norse are well aware of the sword and keyhole symbolism.

Like many Europeans, the Norse eat a diet built around grain. Danish farmers are able to bring in good crops of wheat, the preferred grain of the Norse (and most other peoples). This is the heavy, einkorn variety that will be little used in later millennia. It's tastier than the wheat of 1,000 years hence but has a heavier husk and produces much less grain per acre. In Norway and Sweden, farmers raise barley and buckwheat. Buckwheat is not related to wheat and isn't even a grain (more of a flowering weed with edible seeds), but it is very tough and easy to grow. Barley is also very hardy and easier to raise than wheat.

Harsh weather, poor soil, and hidebound tradition have the Norse on a biannual crop cycle: every other year, each field is allowed to lie fallow and nothing is planted there. While this helps the soil recover somewhat, it effectively halves Norse grain output as compared to the crop rotation systems coming into use in Europe. The Norse do not fertilize their fields, which also cuts production.

The Norse use their grain to make porridge. The recipe is simple: one part grain to two parts water and boiled in an open kettle over a fire until soft enough to eat. The rich boil their porridge in milk, which is somewhat tastier than the thick gruel usually produced this way (this is the same recipe used by Christian monks to make paste, boiled only slightly longer). Porridge is the mainstay of the Norse diet, and this probably accounts for the bad temper of so many Vikings. They do flavor it with nuts — hazelnuts, walnuts and even acorns (which must be leached to remove the tannin before they can safely be eaten).

Some Vikings also grow and eat oats, boiling them as oatmeal or baking them into oatcakes. This grain will grow in popularity as the period goes on. While rich Europeans feed their oats to horses, this is rare in the northlands, where all food is precious.

The Norse do bake bread with their grain, but they make a flatbread without yeast. Skilled bakers are unknown in the Nordic lands, and the bread is often burned. Small flat pieces about six inches long and two wide are baked on broken pieces of pottery placed directly on a fire's glowing coals. Pastries and other fancy baked goods are completely foreign to Vikings.

To make flour, the Norse use a heavy stone rotating grinder. This is very hard work and requires great strength. Both men and women work to grind grain since this is far too strenuous for one person, but it's considered socially unwise for men to admit this in public. Because of the effort required, the Norse more often eat porridge than bread. Both bread and porridge almost always contain hard kernels, and many

Norse have broken or worn-down teeth by the time they reach their thirties. Millers are considered wizards and highly distrusted, because anyone who can make smooth flour must be employing the black arts. Vikings raiding foreign lands often burn mills and kill the millers within because of this.

Cows and sheep are raised on most Norse farms, and livestock are an important symbol of wealth. The Norse take a special fondness in their animals, naming them and lavishing great care on them. Meat only graces the tables of the ruling classes, the jarls and kings. Only sometimes do the hersir (see Chapter 5) see meat at home, though all Viking warriors indulge in slaughtering and eating farm animals while they are out raiding someone else's territory.

There is no formal ban on hunting by commoners (this will come later to Scandinavia), though slaves of course cannot bear weapons, but since they are not considered people, this really doesn't matter. If they starve to death, no one really cares. The Norse like to hunt and fish, and this supplies most of the meat in their diet. Much of the meat from fish and animals (both wild and domestic) is smoked, salted, or dried and stored away. This is both for winter use and to be carried on long sea voyages during the raiding season.

Norse diets also include vegetables — carrots, peas, beans, and cabbages, grown around the house in a kitchen garden. Some are eaten fresh, but most are dried for later use. Vegetables are used to add flavor and texture to porridge, sliced or chopped and tossed into the gruel. The Norse do not make use of manure as fertilizer, but their kitchen gardens are inadvertently helped by the domestic animals wandering around and randomly relieving themselves outside the house.

Most Norse cooking is done with a large iron or clay kettle. The kettle is rarely suspended over the fire; rather, special heating stones are placed in the fire's coals and, when blazing hot, placed carefully in the kettle to heat the water. Never, ever can these stones be thrown, or the pot will break. Long iron tongs or, in poorer households, wet wooden spoons are used to handle the heating stones, which tend to give out and shatter after a few weeks' use or less. The small stone fragments left in the kettle help contribute to poor Norse dental health. Hot heating stones can't be distinguished from cold ones by sight, and most Norse women have hands covered with burn scars in addition to the calluses of hard work.

Some Norse prefer to cook by placing the pot alongside the fire but never over or in the coals. A clay cooking pot must always be at least half full, or it will shatter from the heat differential. The Norse add salt to their food but only at the table; salt deposits will weaken a clay cooking pot and make it unusable.

At home, Norse women do all the cooking while men practice at arms. When hunting or on a raid, Norsemen must tend to their own cooking and some gain renown for it. In families wealthy enough to afford *trälarna*, these slaves do the cooking, but it is the mistress' job to oversee this activity — the stated reason being because *trälarna* are stupid and can't handle complex tasks without guidance; the unstated but widely understood reason is that slaves hate their owners and can't be trusted not to poison them.

The Norse place their food in bowls and eat with their fingers. They use knives, long spoons, and large forks for cooking but not as personal utensils. Norse families normally eat together, except at special feasts where chieftains eat first and take their place at the head of the table.

Drink

Some tales of the Vikings are true; the Norse like to drink huge quantities of alcohol and believe drunkenness to be a mystical state favored by the gods, especially Thor. So, just as Thor gets snockered, so should his followers honor him by drinking heavily and falling down.

The drink of choice among the Vikings is mead, a brew made from fermented honey. The mead is usually strained, so that it has a clear, golden look to it. Its alcohol content is considerably higher than ale. While anyone can drink ale, only the elite are allowed mead.

Ale is usually brewed from barley, which is

soaked in water for several days and then piled into heaps and allowed to sprout. When the sprouts are about three-quarters of the length of the kernel, they are dried in a kiln. The sprouts are removed, and the malt, as the barley is now called, is ground up. As malt, it can be stored for some time. Ground malt is mixed with water, mashed, strained, and fermented to make the ale.

The ale is heavier than that of the 21st Century, with a lot of sediment. It looks a lot like a wheat beer, with a bitter taste. Drinkers often add honey, berries, or herbs (and even spruce berries) to soften this edge. It's usually fairly light in color. While Norse brewers are well aware that roasting the malt will produce a darker brew (dark beers and ales have no more alcohol than their lighter cousins), the Norse do not use drinking glasses, so there is little point in cosmetic touches. Viking ale has a somewhat higher alcohol content than modern beers, but this aspect is inconsistent from batch to batch. Ale is stored for a short period in casks and barrels, but it goes bad very fast in this age before Louis Pasteur. Like modern beer, ale is best consumed fresh. Norse brewers also make beer, which is very similar to ale except for the addition of hops. Beer is less common among the Vikings than ale, but the Vikings like both for variety's sake.

On a raiding voyage, some crews will take along sacks of dried malt, so they can stop and brew ale at some quiet point on their way. Most depend on seizing drink from their victims, but sometimes they find themselves forcing villagers to brew ale at sword-point.

Norse drink their mead, ale, or beer from drinking horns, which are made from the horns of cattle that are cleaned and often richly decorated. A fine drinking horn is a highly prized possession that rarely leaves a place of honor within the home. Some Vikings take long-handled ladles with them while on a raiding/trading expedition, for use in cooking and for drinking.

Wine is not made this far north; grapes will not grow in Scandinavia. Vikings are familiar with wine, and will gladly drink it when they take it from their victims. They'll also trade for it. Anything that alters the consciousness must be a good thing, and so Vikings approve of wine. It will keep much longer than ale when stored, and Vikings would stock their ships with it if only they could stop themselves from drinking it all when they acquire it.

Unusual for their time, the Norse also like non-alcoholic, flavored drinks. They make these by boiling fruit or flowers and then drinking the result either hot or cold. Chamomile and elder flowers are among the favorites, but the Norse will try just about anything. Leaves with special properties are highly valued for these herbal teas. The Norse like hallucinogenic drugs.

Smashed, boiled apples are also a favorite. This can also yield a mildly alcoholic drink, but ale is easier to brew. Instead, the Norse drink it as a sort of hot, pulpy apple juice. Since the Norse don't try to keep these liquids around and they boil them, they are actually more or less safe to drink. Their affinity for flavor brings them the benefit of drinking boiled water, even though they don't understand any germ theory.

The Viking Body

Though bad fiction portrays Vikings as dirty and smelly (pretty much inevitable after a long sea voyage on a low and open ship) the Norse are a clean people. Most farmsteads have a bathhouse attached or nearby, similar to a modern Finnish sauna. Steam rises from hot rocks dropped in a bucket of water, helping the bathers sweat profusely. They often follow a long session of this by plunging into a nearby pond, lake or stream to rinse clean in the frigid waters. The cold plunge is also considered healthful for its own sake; while the Norse value the rush they get from the sudden shock, the frigid water also helps get rid of fleas and lice.

The bathhouse is a social gathering spot, where neighbors sweat and gossip. Bathers are generally naked, and rarely segregated by gender. Men and women sweat together. Once Christianity arrives unrelated men and women will be discouraged from doing so unless a chaperone is present, but the pagan Norse have not yet learned to be ashamed of their bodies.

Men and women carry personal grooming kits, with several combs of different sizes, tweezers

Grooming

Going into battle well-groomed is essential to any Viking warrior worth his or her salt. Those who do not, suffer.

A character who takes the time to bathe, pluck unwanted hairs, comb himself or herself properly, and get completely tricked out for a fight, gains an advantage. The character gains 1d6 + his or her Charisma Bonus number of Grooming Points that can be spent in battle. These may be added to attack rolls, damage rolls, or Armor Class. Once they are spent, they are gone, and the character may allocate them on a round-by-round basis however he or she likes. He or she may use them all at once or keep them back for later use. However, they only last for the duration of the battle in question. The ritual must be repeated for the next fight.

Characters who go into battle dirty and begrimed suffer a -3 Circumstance Penalty to their AC's. Only the shabbiest of warriors do so, and it is a pleasure to kill someone who does not take proper care of himself or herself. A character is considered grimy if he or she has been in at least three fights without bathing or grooming. For every three fights in addition to the first three, the penalty becomes more severe. A character who has not cleaned up after six fights suffers a -4 penalty; one who goes nine fights suffers a -5 penalty, and so forth.

Grooming takes at least half an hour to be done properly. While no Viking expects to be able to properly bathe while at sea on a raid, he or she does make certain to groom himself or herself periodically. To do otherwise would be shameful.

for plucking unwanted hairs and tiny metal spoons for dipping out excess ear wax. A warrior must go into battle well-groomed, to show his high status and overawe his enemies.

The cold doesn't stop fleas and lice, which inhabit the Norse just as they do everyone else of this period. Both men and women obsessively comb their hair in an effort to get rid of head lice, and they are constantly scratching from flea bites. Washing their clothes to get rid of vermin hasn't occurred to the Norse.

Women wear their hair long and usually braided. Men sport beards trimmed to medium length, and wear their hair cut at shoulder length. Neither shave any parts of their bodies, though women pluck facial hair and men pluck out those hairs that spoil their beard line. Many Vikings sport long handlebar mustaches, which they wax on special occasions (battle being the most special occasion of all).

Vikings equate size with strength, and strength is a highly desirable quality. Both men and women of great size are considered very beautiful. A man should be tall and heavily muscled, with narrow waist and broad shoulders. A woman should be tall, with large full breasts and flowing hair. Neither should be fat — the Norse despise fat people — but a woman should have the waist and hips to imply vast birthing potential.

Light skin is considered beautiful, and ruddy cheeks are a sign of health and highly desirable. The Norse value golden hair as the most beautiful, and red-heads are considered dangerously violent — a very good thing by Viking standards.

Hygiene and Disease

The frigid climate and isolation protects the Norse from most diseases. The negative side of this comes when Vikings go on long trading or raiding expeditions. With little exposure to disease, they are highly susceptible when they do encounter it. But even in the northernmost settlements, dysentery, known to Europeans of this time as "the flux," is easy to contract from contaminated water, although Norse cleanliness makes this a fairly unusual condition.

The Norse do not typically build outhouses but instead relieve themselves over an open pit

surrounded by a wicker screen for modesty's sake. They know nothing of toilet paper or washcloths, which may contribute to their surly disposition. The cesspit is used until it fills, and then it is covered with earth and a new pit is dug. The Norse do not usually throw dirt onto the pit while it is still in use, and so it can become quite deep before it is retired. Especially terrible crimes are punished by forced drowning in a cesspit

While the Norse keep their bodies clean, their homes are a completely different story. All of them sport a garbage heap or *gareth* right outside, where food scraps and other refuse is piled and allowed to rot. Between these garbage heaps and dung pits, a Norse village in summertime is host to horrible smells and vast swarms of flies. Escape from this environment may be part of the urge to sail away and raid somebody else's home during the warm months.

Hunters are known to contract the "whale sickness" from eating raw meat, a painful intestinal disorder caused by parasites, which a later age will call trichinosis. Note that the people of this era are not aware of simple techniques like boiling water before drinking it, though they often mix their water with alcohol to achieve much the same effect.

Typhus, spread by lice, breaks out from time to time. Headache, skin rash, and delirium accompanied by a very high fever last three or four days, after which the fever drops. Most victims whose fever breaks will survive, but are subject to relapse for the rest of their lives. About one in four of those infected by typhus typically dies. Leprosy is also common in all the Nordic countries. Game rules for the various diseases

Age

The age ranges in the standard game have virtually no connection with reality. In the Middle Ages, people die much younger than they do now, even if they are not killed in battle or struck down by plague or starvation. It is a hard life in the age before science, and the human body does not weather it well. A more accurate age chart (along with more authentic age groupings) is presented for each of the Lesser Races below.

Race	*Youth*	*Young Adult*	*Prime*	*Middle Age*	*Old Age*	*Venerable*
Human	7-14	14-21	21-28	28-35	35-42	42+
Dwarf	5-8	8-17	17-35	35-55	55-70	70+
Liosalf	15-25	25-35	35-45	45-60	60-80	80+
Svartalf	10-15	15-20	20-30	30-40	40-50	50+

Starting character age is determined by class as usual. The following chart details how old a character of the Lesser Races (see Chapter 7) is when play begins. Divine characters' ages don't matter since they are immortal. To calculate the character's starting age, cross-reference his or her class on the chart below and then roll the appropriate die adding it to the base age (the lowest age for adulthood for the character's race). More information on character classes can be found in Chapter 8.

Class	*Starting Age*
Artificer	Base Age + 2d6
Berserker	Base Age + 1d6
Fighter	Base Age + 1d4
Glytha	Base Age + 2d6
Godi	Base Age + 1d6
Magician	Base Age + 2d6
Ranger	Base Age + 1d6
Rogue	Base Age + 1d4
Skald	Base Age + 2d4
Spákona	Base Age + 1d4
Vitki	Base Age + 2d6

Language

The period in which VIKING AGE is set is a time of linguistic flux. The languages are accurate for early Viking period, but by the end of it they much more closely resemble their modern counterparts.

The following languages are available to player characters. Monsters that can speak use the language of the people near whom they live. They do not have their own separate tongue as in the standard game.

East Norse Dialect
West Norse Dialect
Frankish
Latin
Saxon
Slavonic
Greek
Arabic
Gaelic

Arabic and Greek are very important languages for characters who wish to hire themselves out as mercenaries or who wish to trade. A character who speaks one of the Norse dialects can communicate with someone who speaks the other one, Frankish, or Saxon if he or she makes an Intelligence check at DC 20. Both participants must speak slowly to do so.

that plague the Norse can be found in Chapter 9.

The Norse are big people, and they usually suffer from degenerative arthritis of their joints by the time they enter middle age. This is a major driving force in their desire for a battlefield death — a big, stout warrior in his 30's is almost certainly in constant pain. The few herbal remedies do little for this, and heavy drinking is a standard response. Almost all Norse, of all ages, have tapeworms.

Infant mortality among the Norse is about 17 percent, and another 16 percent do not live to age 20. About half of all Norse men who reach age 21 do not see age 30; most of these by achieving the Viking goal of death in battle. Almost another 30 percent will die before reaching 40. A 50-year-old Viking man is considered quite old.

Because of the risks of childbirth, 35 percent of women who reach age 21 won't see 30. Most women can expect to die in their 40's, though.

Language

While in fairy tales all characters speak a "common" language, as in many things, real life is not this way. The Norse speak two dialects, East and West Norse. The two tongues are related enough to be mutually understandable if spoken slowly and clearly. Over time these will develop into modern Norwegian, Danish, and Swedish.

Norse is a poetic language and, despite its common roots, does not always translate into 21st-Century English very well. The Norse love word play, especially what they call kennings. A kenning is a metaphoric name for a person, place, thing, or action. Its meaning should not be immediately obvious, and it should have multiple translations. For example, the Norwegian king, Harald, was known as Hardraada, literally "hard-ruler," implying not only his leadership qualities but also strength in battle (a "hard" weapon being a good thing) and, of course, sexual prowess. To earn a kenning from a skald (poet) is a signal of honor. More information on kennings can be found in Chapter 8.

The Norse are overwhelmingly illiterate. There is no real need for written records, and, with the harsh life they lead, there is little time to be wasted on frivolous education. Those who can read are taught the runic alphabet. Later peoples will believe the runes to be a mystical language fraught with deep meaning, but Vikings use it to inscribe graffiti in places they visit. For example, in the Orkney Islands a lusty (and obviously frustrated) Viking carved a long paean to the breasts and lovemaking skills of a woman named Ingeborg that foolish dreamers of later times would long take to be a magical spell of some sort. Other Vikings carved their names and accomplishments in the marble of Italian cities.

Part of this misunderstanding comes from the Norse love of vandalism. Vikings simply enjoy

carving their names on things and destroying the works of other peoples. Later scholars will have a hard time fathoming that someone would spend hours carving runes for such a simple purpose.

The Norse consider foreigners inferior prey but often will learn their language to better trade with them and, when necessary, taunt them. Many Vikings are quite adept at learning foreign languages. They like insulting their enemies, and a good joke at their expense will raise one's standing with his comrades.

As they learn local languages, they find themselves using them more and more, as foreigners have a hard time mastering the poetic twists and double-meanings of Norse. Foreign words and structures creep into Norse usage, and, over time, Viking settlers begin speaking a hybrid tongue. Norse is a dynamic language and evolves fairly quickly: when Vikings first attack England in the late 700's they and the Anglo-Saxons can understand one another if they speak slowly and clearly. By 1100, this is no longer true.

Viking Homes and Gardens

The Norse are skilled woodworkers, but they seldom build in stone. A handful of important buildings, like royal residences in the later Viking period, are built of stone but most buildings are wooden.

Homes of poorer Vikings can be pitiful indeed, made of reeds covered in dried mud. Some Vikings build their homes by excavating a hole in the ground and roofing it over with branches and straw.

In towns and villages, each home, no matter how poor, is fenced off from its neighbors. The fence is similarly made from mud and wattle (dried reeds), and this serves to keep domestic animals inside and to keep the ever-present garbage heaps from spilling over into someone else's home. This quagmire of rotting garbage and animal dung is known in Norse as a *gareth.*

Norse homes have no chimneys; poor ones just let the smoke filter out through the straw, while richer ones have openings just under the roof to allow smoke to escape. The home itself is a single open room, with a floor of packed earth. In the center sits the stone hearth with an ever-present fire. Sometimes there are sleeping alcoves around the rim of the central room, but more often there are raised sleeping platforms made of packed earth (sometimes faced with wooden boards) lining the walls. The inhabitants sleep on these at night, and sit on them during the day.

Above the sleeping benches, shelves usually ring the walls, holding food and household tools. Poor homes have no other furniture, but richer ones have wooden stools and chairs, plus, of course, a long table for feasting. A better home also has chests for storing household goods, especially food supplies, and better ones have locks on them. Food is also stored in baskets and pottery jars.

Despite the poor appearance of many Norse homes, their owners take great pride in them and like to decorate their doors. Both the door itself and its frame are carved, sometimes very intricately. Norse buildings rarely have windows because they allow heat to escape and Scandinavia is very, very cold. Inside, light comes from smoky oil lamps, carved from soapstone and fueled with animal fat. Some make candles from tallow (a variety of animal fat, usually from the parts of cattle near the kidneys). Rich Vikings get their light from beeswax candles, but this is quite a luxury.

Better homes also sport storage buildings outside, or sometimes lean-to structures. In rural areas, these lean-tos serve as barns for cattle and sheep.

A better Norse farmstead will have a longhouse — a rectangular structure with multiple rooms. The Norse usually build to square or rectangular floor plans, but they are not strict with their geometry, and the angles are rarely very precise. A long house is simply a lengthened version of the standard home, with multiple rooms within. Sometimes a barn is attached to one end, with internal access. This allows both the animals' body heat to help warm the structure during winter and the people to tend the animals without being exposed to the elements.

When conquering lands from other people and settling there, the Norse usually wreck the locals' buildings and use the materials to build houses and public buildings in their own fashion. They don't usually adapt existing struc-

tures to their own use, unless they are particularly impressed with a castle or fine home. If they have the time, they do take great joy in pulling down cathedrals and monasteries stone by stone. Consummate vandals, they enjoy tying their longships to bridges and pulling them down — Olaf Tryggvason will be remembered for a thousand years because "London Bridge is falling down."

Clothing

Almost all clothes are woolen and are dyed a variety of colors. Women wear dresses with full skirts, narrow waists, long sleeves, and deeply plunging necklines. In colder weather they don more woolens underneath, but, in what passes for the northern summer, they display a substantial amount of skin.

Men also go about clad in wool, wearing tunics belted at the waist over thick trousers. Like the women, they favor bright colors; with so little color in their environment for much of the year, they feel the need for contrast.

Both sexes wear a minimum of jewelry. Vikings usually are heavily clothed to ward off the cold, and so they can't easily show off their jewels. They like amber, especially carved into small works of art, but don't get many opportunities to wear it.

Viking Sex

Vikings like sex. A lot. They are an overwhelmingly illiterate people forced by their climate to spend half of the year indoors, and so they while the days away with the pleasures of board games and sex acts.

A wealthy Viking man often has three or more wives; there is no limit as long as he is able to support them all financially and satisfy them all sexually. Some also maintain young female slaves for sexual purposes, but this is unpopular with many Vikings. Foreign women, especially Christians, are considered unimaginative and frigid and poor lovers. They are also usually much smaller and physically weaker than a Norse woman, and Vikings of both genders like their sex rough; it doesn't count as sex if no furniture gets broken. The concept of sadomasochism lies a thousand years in the future and doesn't apply to Vikings: while there are many injuries resulting from sex, these are the result of over-enthusiasm rather than obtaining pleasure through inflicting or receiving pain.

Vikings have little shame about their bodies or about sexual pleasure. While some foreigners (especially Arabs) claim they have sex in public with random strangers, this is not literally true and says more about the prudish outlook of Moslems and Christians. While they perform the act of out view of bystanders, there is no shame attached to it and couples will have sex in a common sleeping room; others present are expected to pretend they are asleep. The Vikings value individual glory in sex as well as battle; orgies are known but unusual.

Since the Norse usually sleep in common rooms, their children grow up very aware of sex and are ready to start themselves as soon as they are physically able. Virginity is no precious treasure to be jealously guarded.

Marriage is seen as a political and economic alliance more than a sexual one. It is bad form to make love to another's spouse, but the penalties are very light, and, if one pays compensation, all is forgiven. Usually, at least: women hold grudges against other women far longer (and more violently) than do men. Norse women have little respect for the capacity of their men to show moderation in sex; it is the "other woman" they hold responsible for infidelity.

Illegitimate birth doesn't carry the same stigma as it does in Christian Europe, though a bastard is at a legal disadvantage. Bastard sons will occasionally claim the throne in Viking lands if they are acknowledged by their father. A mother names the child's father, and it is a social misstep to deny parentage. Vikings bear the surname -son or -dottir until they earn a kenning (see "Language"), though some keep this name if they are especially proud of it.

Because of their views on parentage, the father-son bond is weaker among Vikings than the uncle-nephew relationship. A Viking warrior has a special responsibility for his "sister-son" and is more likely to teach him the warrior's ethos than is his father.

The Norse expect a woman to take an equal role in initiating sex and in the act itself. The many

inventive methods of the East are a riddle to the Norse and oral sex is unusual, but the "female superior" position is common among Vikings. Norse women may not be the legal equals of men, but they are highly assertive in most areas.

Vikings dislike homosexuality and scorn those who practice it. This helps fuel their particular hatred for Christian monks and for Arabs in general; common Viking belief is that monasteries are simply homosexual havens (and often, this view is on target). Arab tolerance for alternative sexual practices leads Vikings to conclude that all Arabs are bisexual. As with many homophobic peoples there is a certain ambiguity involved in such views: the god Loki, for example, is often portrayed as cross-gendered. The openly gay can expect at best to be treated rudely, at worst to be murdered.

Vikings react strongly to the rape of a Norsewoman; in a society where sex is free and easy, they well understand that rape is a crime of violence and humiliation: they use it themselves against foreign women, to spread terror. But when it happens to one of their own, they are uniformly enraged, and it is one of the very few crimes meriting death. Even murder is punishable only by fine.

Those Playful Vikings

During the long, dark northern winter, the Norse like to amuse themselves by playing board games. They are passionate about their games, though most acknowledge that even the best game is not nearly as much fun as killing people.

In the early Viking period, the most popular Viking game is the board game known as *Hnefnatafl*. This is a game similar to Celtic board games, in which one player attempts to capture the enemy king. *Hnefnatafl* will be forgotten as soon as the Vikings discover chess.

Vikings came across chess sometime around the year 1000 AD; just when or how is not clear, but its play spread across the Viking world within a few years. Later Vikings are obsessed with chess play, and many carry kennings attesting to their skill at the game. They carve pieces in the shape of their gods, and a high-quality chess set is a prized possession.

Vikings who don't go raiding enjoy outdoor sports in the summertime — running races and throwing objects. But for most Vikings, the most popular sport remains killing people and taking their stuff. Vikings are cruel, even by the standards of a cruel age, and will make killing into a game, slicing captives slowly to death or boasting that they can shoot an arrow through multiple bodies. They also enjoy forcing captives to perform for them, often by killing one another.

Norse Magic

Vikings believe the world to be infested with magic, and they usually fear its use. They kill foreigners they believe to be wizards, and this helps explain their deep dislike for Christian clergy (of course, they raid monasteries for the same reason as modern bank robbers: that's where the money is).

But at home, many Norse employ village priests and priestesses for mundane purposes. Magical means are sought to aid in seduction or to achieve sexual prowess (especially for the few surviving older men). Vengeance against a disliked neighbor — bringing disease upon his cattle, for example — is also common.

Clerical Classes

There are two types of priests in the Viking world, the male godi and the female glytha. Usually godi study runic magic and glytha perfect sejdr (the song and spell magic described below). Some cross over to learn the other system; this is acceptable for glytha but not for godi. Male priests often do know sejdr magic, but it is socially unacceptable for them to practice it openly. If encountered in the trance world they will often claim to be female.

Godi

The godi are male priests, in charge of the common worship of the gods. Most are pledged to a particular god, but a godi is allowed to assist in making sacrifice to any member of the pantheon. The godi practice runic magic, and a handful also know sejdr magic but do not openly discuss this.

Godi are chosen from intelligent Norse boys who show little sign of becoming accomplished warriors. They are usually slight of build and

often lack the ferocious temperament of their fighting brothers. They are apprenticed to an elder godi, who teaches them the runes, the religious practices of the Norse, and other mystic knowledge.

In a very few special cases, young and upcoming warriors will divert a few years to this study and become godi as well. This is allowed, but rare. A hersir or jarl who is also a godi is highly respected, however, and some take the years away from fighting to gain this honor. But the Norse do not value knowledge for its own sake, and one takes great risks with his reputation by dropping out to enter a course of study.

Norse worship does not often include temples, but there are some. These are manned and maintained permanently by godi, funded by donations of nearby villages. Temples will be more common in the later Viking period, when kings and jarls have the authority and organization to collect tax money and funnel it to temple upkeep.

Unlike most human religions, the Norse belief lacks a theocracy. The idea of taking orders from a priest is laughable to the Vikings, and they are endlessly amused to watch Christian priests order peasants and even nobles about. A godi is a failed warrior, and, while worthy of respect for their knowledge of the gods, they have no special authority deriving from that relationship. A godi should be treated as a social equal and not scorned for their lack of courage, but a warrior takes no orders from a godi. These priests exist to assist Vikings in speaking with their gods, not to take on the power of the gods themselves as in other lands.

Just as there is no theocratic power, neither is there a higher religious authority. An old and wise godi will usually have his way over a younger one, but this depends on the power of personality rather than holding a formal office.

Godi oversee sacrifices to the gods and also ritual feasts in their honor. At these feasts, each participant speaks in praise of the god they wish to honor before eating from a choice roasted animal or large cut of meat, and the process is repeated with a drinking horn of ale or mead. The Norse believe their gods are much like themselves, taking delight in battle, feasting, drinking, and sex. To do all of these with gusto honors the deities. It is a simple matter, requiring little intervention by priests.

At the end of a warrior's life, godi also cast the runes to determine the fate of the dead. If a funeral pyre is warranted — an extremely high honor for a fallen warrior — the godi direct these events. They also handle ritual burials, a lesser but still significant honor. The godi never actually perform the funeral rites or sacrifices but rather tell the participants what methods to use. They are repositories of knowledge rather than authority figures.

Most Norse worship takes place outside the view of godi. A thousand years hence a few scattered groups claiming to revive the Norse faith will hold elaborate outdoor ceremonies, but these are based on Celtic rather than Norse practice.

Glytha

While glytha are commonly identified with sejdr magic, they are a very ancient institution and the origin of the Valkyries. Some clans still follow the old practice of taking a young and beautiful glytha along with them to war to serve as battle maiden. She foretells each warrior's future if time allows before battle. Afterwards, she is the chooser of the slain: captured enemy warriors are brought before her and their captors describe their deeds. If they are sufficiently worthy, she will go into a trance to consult the spirits as to the gods' wishes. Afterwards, she will either declare the prisoner unworthy (in which case he becomes a slave) or that they are chosen. In the latter case, she will draw a small but sharp ritual dagger and plunge it into the man's heart, often while administering a "kiss of death." Some claim that a few battle maidens do so during ritual sex.

To be marked for death by a glytha brings great honor to the chosen one and also to those warriors from her tribe who met and defeated him in combat. Clansmen accompanied by a battle maiden will therefore sometimes try hard to wound but not kill a formidable opponent in hopes of obtaining such glory. But Viking battle-madness is such that it is very difficult to show restraint. The death ritual is rare when

fighting non-Vikings and almost always is confined to battles between Viking clans (where enemies possessing honor are to be found).

By the time of the Lindisfarne raid, most Vikings have come to believe that they are the ones chosen from among the slain by Valkyries sent by Odin. This belief has become more and more common as the Vikings fight other people, since the thought of dying in glorious combat against the Saxons or Poles only to be left to rot because these ignorant folk have no glytha is highly troubling.

More common duties of the glytha are acting as midwife during births, foretelling the future, and reading omens. They also administer sacrifices to the gods, most often to Freya, but they are not limited to her service. Few glytha marry, but it is not strictly forbidden, and no one expects the glytha to remain celibate. They are sexually active like all healthy Norsewomen, and their children are considered touched by the gods and greatly favored. An unmarried glytha lives off the gifts provided by those she serves, and a skilled priestess can become quite wealthy. The Norse are not required to support their clergy like Christians are, however, and an unskilled or unpopular godi or glytha will quickly starve or move on to find a new line of work.

Unlike godi, glytha do not maintain temples and usually have no public function. They are "private" clergy, ministering to friends and family. One must seek out a glytha to obtain her aid, and, if she doesn't feel like assisting, she may claim she is not a priestess and has no idea why a stranger might think she would be.

As with godi, glytha learn their craft as apprentices. A likely girl is sent to study with a seasoned glytha, but no one openly admits that this is the reason. Instead, everyone maintains the fiction that the girl has been fostered or is helping with farm or other hard work while someone in the household is injured (a common Norse practice). This novice is known as a volva.

Glytha can come from all social classes allowed to bear arms (a slave girl can never grow up to be a glytha). The daughter of a man allowed to carry weapons but unable to afford them (one of the many poor Vikings) is not forbidden to study, but faces many social prejudices in finding a mentor. Even queens in the later Viking period will be glytha and feared for this power. Queen Gunnhild, wife of Erik Blood Axe, used her powers for evil and vengeance until finally Erik put her to death.

While it is highly unusual, a glytha is allowed to bear arms and fight if she meets all the other qualifications for a woman to do so: young, unmarried, and has the permission of her father. But it takes long training and study to become a glytha, and few women are still young enough to fight when they have completed their study, especially since a Viking warrior must spend many, many hours in the practice of arms.

Some are lured to it anyway because it is rumored that a powerful glytha with a good reputation in battle can be chosen after her death to ride as one of Odin's Valkyries. Others claim that the use of earthly arms is not necessary, that a glytha can fight her battles in the trance world (see below) and gain equal glory. Only the All-Father knows for sure, and he isn't telling.

Spákona

The spákona is a foreteller of the future, a specialty of the Greenland Norse but found in Iceland and Norway as well. These women — and they are always female — were not known before glytha learned to practice sejdr magic. They probably existed, but their connection to the spirit world was not recognized, and they were dismissed as insane and likely killed as useless mouths to feed. The Norse world has no mercy for those who can't fend for themselves or contribute in some manner.

A spákona lacks the special training of a glytha and performs none of the priestess duties. She comes by her abilities naturally, and has a connection to the spirit world so deep that she often cannot distinguish between this realm and reality.

While in a trance, the spákona speaks with her *fylgia* (see below) and with other spirits. These bring her knowledge of the future. But lacking training, an inexperienced prophetess can fall prey to mischievous spirits who feed her false information.

Socially, the spákona does not receive the respect shown the glytha and takes part in none

of the other duties. She is consulted for oracular visions only and is feared and somewhat scorned. Few of these women marry, and most men fear having sex with them lest a spiritual vision come upon them during the act

On the other hand, a spákona has much greater powers within the spirit realm than the usual glytha. Innate sensitivity to that other world can't be taught, and for it to awaken without training means it had to be extremely powerful. The very few natural talents who can also master a glytha's lessons can be very powerful indeed.

Unfortunately, few do so, and greater sensitivity usually equates to a faster onset of madness and death. The Norse fear this sort of insanity, especially the random prophecies that issue from such a woman, and believe it very unlucky to kill a mad spákona. Denied the mercy of a quick sword thrust to the chest and unable to clean themselves or even gain the wit to leap off a cliff, the end of a crazed prophetess is sad indeed.

Song and Spell

The Norse magic known as sejdr apparently originally came from the Sami, the people living to the north of the Vikings in what will one day be called Lappland. The Sami are an ancient, nomadic people feared for their magical abilities. While the Norse speak of the Sami contemptuously as cowardly and backward, neither do the Vikings raid them, and they avoid contact whenever possible.

There are several versions of sejdr magic, the most popular being *galdr* and *gandr*, or song and spell. The glytha sings a special series of songs to put her into a trance and often takes herbs as well to induce this state. A highly skilled glytha is able to bring on the trance state through force of will alone, using none of these aids, but even a novice volva can slip into a trance with a few weeks of training.

In the trance state, the glytha meets her *fylgia* (literally, "shadow soul"), or guardian spirit. The *fylgia* often takes the form of an animal, and all people have one. A *fylgia* will at times appear in one's dreams to warn of impending danger. But if it appears to one who is awake (or outside the trance state), death will follow soon afterwards. Most are common predators: wolves, foxes, hawks, and sometimes deer or horses. Rarely a *fylgia* of great power will manifest as a dragon or human. The *fylgia* is no mere spirit servant but a guide and equal partner.

There is no connection between the power of a *fylgia* and that of its human. A respected and mighty king or glytha might have a weak chipmunk of a *fylgia*, while some madman wandering the forests could be protected by a fearsome, mighty dragon-like *fylgia*. The Nornir assign these bonds, and are known for their twisted, unfathomable humor. Unlike humans, *fylgia* do not appear to grow or change; it's unclear what happens to a *fylgia* when its human dies, whether it is re-assigned, wanders loose as a free spirit, or if it also dies. Most believe the two beings live and die together.

In the trance state, the fylgia protects its glytha from the many evil spirits who inhabit the dream world. Some of these spirits will approach the first-time volva and pretend to be her *fylgia*. If she is careless enough to give her true name to an evil spirit, that spirit can take over her consciousness and she will soon die. Spirits can attack the trance-walker and inflict damage that manifests as mental or emotional illness when awake or, in cases of very severe damage, physical injury or even death.

In the trance world, the rune, Eh, will help summon the fylgia, while the rune, Ur, is helpful in driving away evil spirits. The glytha imagines the rune in her mind or, in her spirit form, traces it in the air (of course, her physical body is not moving, so this is more a method of focusing her thoughts).

After some practice, a novice in the trance state can project her thoughts into the mind of another. For best reception the target should be asleep, but with some skill the projection can be made into a waking mind as well. A glytha can also communicate thoughts in this manner to elves and dwarves, and this is the most common method of communication between the Nine Worlds.

Projected thoughts also take the form of small birds or animals, and sensitive people sometimes spot these spirit-creatures racing through the physical world. These take the form of messages, in which the glytha appears in the recipi-

ent's dream or even while he or she is awake and speaks to him or her. Others can often see the spirit form if the recipient is awake. The spirit form floats above the ground and is always cloaked in an unearthly beauty, even if the actual glytha is not especially attractive. These sendings can also be sent to non-humans and even to monsters, it is believed, which can be awakened to attack one's enemies.

If powerful enough, a glytha can even send a message to the gods, or at least to their *fylgia*, or ask a spirit to take one there. If the request annoys the god, he or she can reach out to crush the glytha with a brief thought. The gods periodically will use the spirit world to send messages to their followers, and many quests begin in this fashion.

A powerful glytha can cast spells while in the trance world. The most common spells are those that help crops or hunting, cause people to fall in love, or bring health or luck to the object of the sending. Spells can also be used for nastier purposes — to ruin crops, kill livestock, destroy a love, or bring bad luck to the target. They can also be used to make direct attacks on someone — to sicken or even kill him or her. This last can be done only by the most powerful priestesses.

However, a direct attack on another human will bring that human's *fylgia* quickly to the scene to battle the attacking glytha and her *fylgia*. With its own existence on the line, the offended *fylgia* will fight very hard for its human compatriot. A strong enough *fylgia* will detect a mild attack — a sending to ruin a love affair, or wilt a crop — and also move quickly to interfere with this attack on its human.

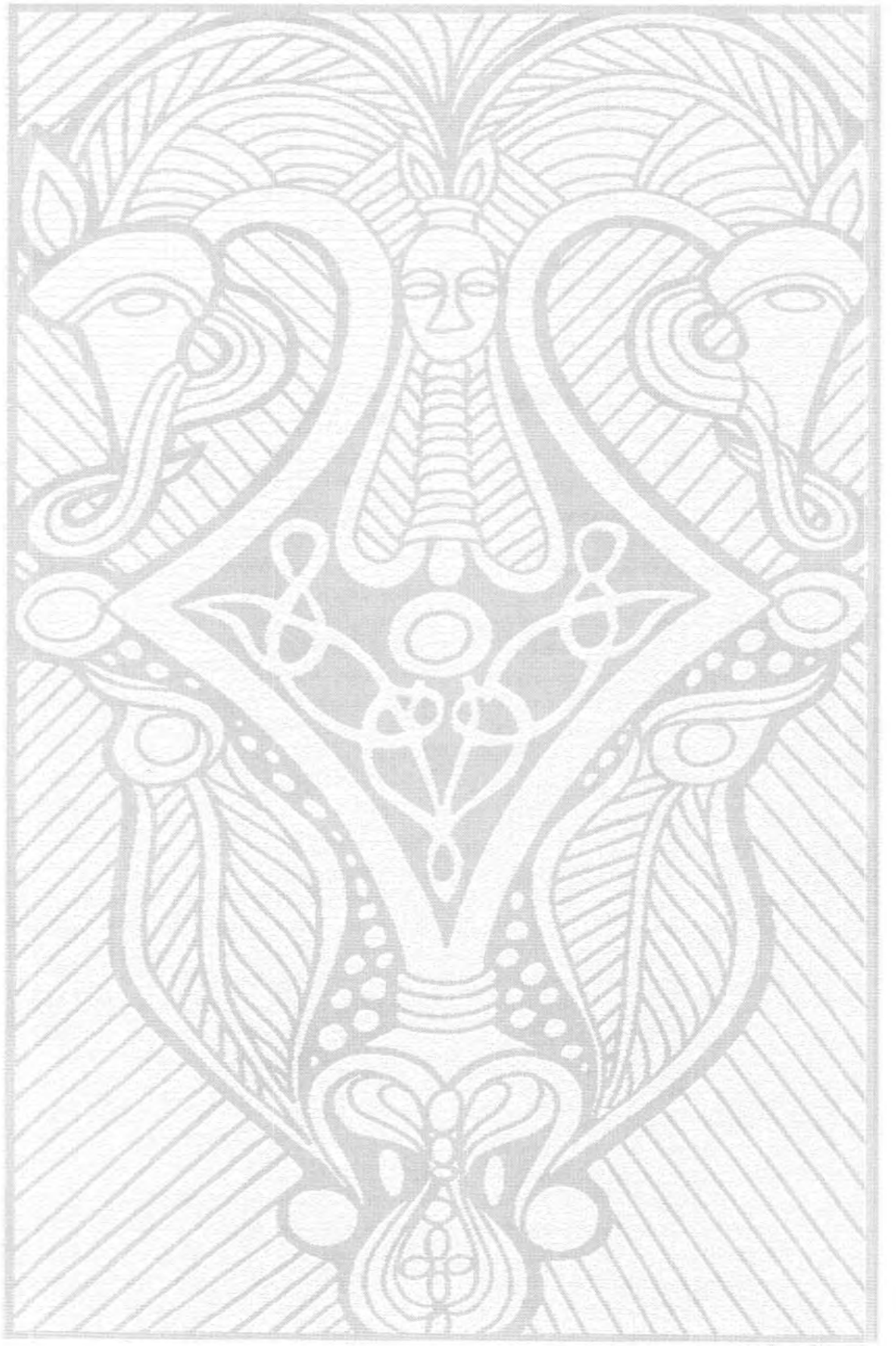
The trance world looks a lot like the real one, and, at the simpler stages of power, the glytha's mind shapes her perception to match that which makes her comfortable. What she sees is not "real" but a version of the trance world that her mind can accept. At the higher stages of power, these crutches start to fall away and she sees the trance world as it really is, and it looks a lot like Midgard. For the most powerful glytha, the trance world can be shaped exactly like the real world, and she can wander through it and gain information about other people and places. With great power and skill, she can even emerge from the trance world at a different location from that where she entered it.

If the glytha encounters another glytha in the trance world, they can communicate or even fight. While combat is a mental struggle, their minds shape this in Norse fashion and they appear to themselves to be fighting with sword and spear. Wounds suffered here do not usually correspond to physical injuries on the glytha's entranced body, but a spear thrust to the breast will result in cardiac arrest in her body back home, though no mark will be left on her. What appears to happen is that her mind believes she has been killed, and her body accepts this as fact and dies. A few glytha who have experienced a trance world injury have suffered an analog to it back home (a wound opens on her body, or a bone snaps) but this is very rare.

Glytha can also communicate with spirits in this fashion. Some of these are *fylgia* of other humans, others have no connection to the physical realm. Some are friendly, some are evil, most have no interest in human affairs. They exist outside time and space and thus have access to knowledge of past and future if they can be convinced to share it with the glytha. If the glytha fights a spirit, once again her mind shapes this as earthly combat with the same possible results.

Spákona are usually recognized by the spirits as different than glytha. Spirits will rarely kill them, instead employing some mischief by feeding their madness with warped tales of the future. Spákona are not usually capable of defending themselves, but will sometimes lash out at a glytha in the spirit world. Their vast power can cause grave injury and even death, and some glytha have been known to stalk and murder spákona in the trance world to reduce this threat. Others kill spákona because they believe it is merciful to end their madness.

Among the gods, Freya is the foremost practitioner of sejdr and taught it to the Aesir. Odin is also conversant with the craft, having turned himself into a woman in order to learn its secrets.



Chapter 5
Vikings at War

According to the Norse outlook on life, valor in combat not only brings one honor, it is the very path to salvation. While it's vital to find glory under arms, it's just as important to defend one's comrades and look out for their well-being.

Raiding is vital to Viking existence, part of their very name (to vik is to raid, in Norse). They do it for enjoyment but also to sustain their people. Vikings like stealing precious objects, but they'll take anything useful that's not nailed down: food, clothing, livestock, tools, and slaves.

Leadership and Organization

Early Viking raids are made by a single ship bearing a small party of friends, family and neighbors. In the springtime a "hersir," or respected warrior with a local following, announces that he plans to "go a-viking" that summer. Usually, he owns the longship used for the raid, or makes arrangements with the ship owner for the mission. In a well-populated region, several ship owners may band together under the leadership of one hersir. The hersir also engages a navigator, a professional who may or may not be a local man as well.

Once the hersir has made the call, warriors indicate their desire to participate. They assemble at a time and place designated by the hersir, bearing their own weapons and provisions. It is bad form to decline an invitation without good reason (health being the main reason not to go); if too many local warriors refuse to show up, the hersir quickly loses his authority. Once assembled, the warriors confirm the hersir's authority to lead them in battle and to pay the navigator and agree on a division of spoils. Most bands agree on a formal code of conduct. Many bands refuse to accept women, as sexual tension on a tiny ship crammed with lusty and armed young men can spell disaster.

A hersir calling for a raid usually has a specific target in mind. The band sails for this spot, attacks, and sails off bearing their loot. If the navigator is off target, they may sail around until they find a likely village, monastery, or castle and attack it anyway. Once the ship is filled with loot, the Vikings may spend a few weeks sailing around scouting new victims for next summer.

Guile in warfare is not only acceptable but highly prized. Vikings have been known to enter enemy cities by faking the death of their leader and asking for Christian burial. The "dead" chieftain then rises up to slay the priests and local leaders who've come out for the ceremony. Other Viking leaders have captured local pigeons, tied burning brands to their feet and sent them back to their roosts within a town to spread fires.

Only in the middle part of the Viking Age will Norse begin to sail and march to war in large armies. As Europeans devise better methods of defense against Viking raiders, so do the raiders begin to form larger groups to overwhelm them. A number of hersir will pledge loyalty to one of their number and agree to follow him in battle. This man, known as a "jarl," slowly begins to gain authority in other areas especially the right to levy taxes (to maintain longships and navigators for the most part).

Norse tradition is anti-authoritarian, and late into the Viking Age they still refer to their leaders as "first among equals." In practice, they recognize the need for unified leadership and a jarl can wield great power. However, one common trait in Norse war-bands is a ban on spreading rumors — all information must come directly from the leader or, in larger groups, from his leader to subordinate leaders and thus to the men.

Just as hersir begin to follow jarls, so do jarls turn to kings for greater organization. By the late Viking Age, there are recognized monarchies in Norway, Sweden, and Denmark, crowns usually obtained at the price of heavy bloodshed.

Multiple kingships arise in the 900's in each place, with each of them unified by the millennium. In 1016, King Knut can even briefly claim lordship over England, Denmark, and Norway.

Kings and jarls also have responsibility for protecting their realm, and here the free will of raiding does not apply. Every man between 18 and 50 is liable for service in the *hird*, or militia, when the ruler declares the land to be in danger. All must report to the spots designated, armed and ready for action.

Like hersir and jarls, kings are expected to lead their men in battle and even on raids. They stand in the front rank in battle, and much of their authority derives from their prowess in personal combat. Vikings equate size with strength, and it's not unusual for a Viking leader to simply be the biggest Viking. Rolf the Ganger (Walker), who seized Normandy from the Franks for Norse settlement, was reputed to be so large he had to walk everywhere because he could not sit astride a horse without his legs dragging on the ground. But kings are also valued for wily strategy, which means a good general can hold his authority long after age has betrayed his body.

With the economic motive of Viking raiding, it won't take long before Vikings start skipping the plunder stage and simply fighting for pay. Some villages bribe Vikings to stay away, but this doesn't sate their lust for blood. It's actually more cost-effective to pay them to attack somebody else.

English kings will be hiring huge numbers of Viking warriors by the 800's, as they fight one another for control of the island. And far away, the Byzantine emperor will be protected by Vikings of his famed Varangian Guard.

Tactics and Organization

While the Vikings glory in battle, they are not all about individual achievements. Seeking glory at the expense of your comrades is considered highly dishonorable — the most honorable death is one obtained while protecting your friends from an enemy. The good Viking listens to his leaders and obeys them; though Vikings are highly individualistic, they all agreed to follow their hersir or jarl in battle, and to go back on one's word is immensely dishonorable.

A Viking cannot retreat from battle and maintain honor unless the hersir or jarl orders him to fall back. In that case, dishonor would come from breaking his word to obey. The leader is assumed to have good reason for such an order, and if the individual warriors disagree there will be time for recriminations later. A Viking retreat also offers some of the best opportunities for glorious death, fighting off hordes of foes to save one's comrades.

Vikings, at least those whose labor isn't required on the family farm, practice pretty steadily when not actually engaged in war or raiding. There are several traditional formations they work to perfect, and a Viking band can usually form into one fairly quickly on a shouted order from its leader. There is usually some jostling and confusion when Vikings who haven't practiced together try to form up alongside one another, but all Vikings use the same traditions, and they can sort things out.

Shield-Wall

Viking armies almost always begin battle in a shield-wall. This allows leaders to gain control of their men while they are protected from enemy arrows. Warriors sheathe their swords and hold their shield on their left arm. The typical shield-wall has two ranks, with the first kneeling and the second standing directly behind them. Each man overlaps his shield with those of his neighbors to left and right, while the second rank brings their down to overlap its bottom with the top of the shield of the first-ranker in front of him.

Holding a shield is exhausting and requires long practice, but the shield-wall helps ease the strain. Until the enemy is on them, the first rank can rest the bottom of their shields on their knees, while the second rank will place the bottom of theirs on the shoulders of the first-rankers unless the enemy is loosing arrows at them.

Two ranks is the minimum for a shield-wall, but some leaders thicken it with a third or even more. These men step forward to replace those in the first two ranks who fall, or provide greater weight in the clash of arms with an opposing force.

Hersir and other renowned warriors often stand in front of the shield wall, challenging enemies to single combat and hurling insults. The Norse love a good insult, and the ability to tweak one's foes with verbal missiles is highly desired. When the enemy approaches, these warriors help break up the assault with wide swings of their swords and axes, preventing their foes from concentrating on one point of the shield-wall. The intimidation of their formidable presence is just as important as their weapons.

While awaiting enemy action, most Vikings in a shield-wall ram the butt end of their spears into the ground. A veteran warrior knows to conserve his strength. When combat looms they will take it in their right hand, and if the enemy charges the shield-wall the Vikings lower their spears to present a bristling front.

Breaking a shield-wall takes practice and is very dangerous. The attacking warrior uses his sword and shield to push aside enemy spear-points and get close to the shield-wall. There's no point to hacking at the wall, though inexperienced warriors sometimes try. Instead, the warrior gives a mighty kick to the shield of one of the first-rankers, and then shoves his body into the gap to keep the wall from re-forming. If he's lucky, no one can draw a blade in time to pierce him before he regains his feet and starts fighting. Others go even further, bodily hurling themselves at the first-ranker in hopes of causing several members of the wall to stumble or fall.

Warriors need to follow the wall-breaker closely, to exploit the gap before it closes. A warrior will usually be designated to make the attempt before the charge begins, so that his fellows are ready when the time comes. Others will shout out their intention, especially those who have gone berserk.

Holding or breaking a shield-wall is a matter of pride to the Vikings. That a line stood unbroken honors all who were there, while the act of breaking a wall is considered highly heroic and a definite step toward Valhalla. But the act has to be useful; killing oneself to no purpose gains a Viking only scorn. An unexploited gap is the same as no gap at all.

Chaos erupts when a line is broken, as the warriors within it quickly find themselves beset from several sides. Panic often ensues, and casualties can be massive.

Swine's Head

Odin himself supposedly taught the Vikings this tactic, but more likely they picked up it second-hand from Rome's legions (by way of the Germans or Saxons). This is simply an armed flying wedge, designed to pierce a shield-wall.

Two men stand at the front of the wedge, holding a place of great honor. Three stand behind them, five behind them, and so on. This huge wedge is then pointed at the enemy, and the men run at them and try to smash through their line. The swine's head is only useful at short range, however becasue the men behind inevitably run into those in front of them, someone trips, more men fall over him, and a rugby-like scrum develops.

Since the swine's head must therefore form up close to the enemy, missile-armed troops (those with bows or throwing spears) can break up the formation before it even starts moving. Vikings usually only use the swine's head against other Vikings or other northern peoples who rely on the shield wall and disdain the bow. Against Muslims or Byzantine Greeks, with their many (and often mounted) archers, the swine's head is utterly useless.

Weapons

Norse warriors favor the sword, with the axe also finding favor with many. The spear is considered a somewhat less honorable weapon, but almost all Norse warriors carry them and train in their use. Vikings aren't always seeking honor with every act, so any weapon that helps kill people is popular.

Swords

The typical Viking sword is a long, straight two-edged blade. About three feet long, the Viking sword is usually fullered (that is, it has a "blood groove" down the center) with a straight, simple cross-piece above its pommel. The pommel has a heavy knob, as the Viking warrior will often swing the sword two-handed in a vertical arc with his full strength behind it, and this aids his leverage.

While Valkyries are depicted wielding swords in sagas and in artwork, the handful of Norse women to take up arms usually prefer a dagger and spear combination. Lacking the size and strength to stand toe-to-toe with a Norse male warrior or heft a useful shield, they rely on speed and agility to get past the "killing zone" of a big man's sword or axe.

Many Norwegian Vikings prefer the longsword known as the long-sax (so-called because they believe the Saxons developed this weapon). It is about the same size as a true Norse long sword, but only single-edged. This allows it to be swung in a broad arc just like an axe, with the broad killing zone of a sword but without the back edge endangering its wielder should it bounce. The long-sax is a chieftain's weapon, since it is best used with plenty of maneuvering room, and is usually richly decorated.

Whether single- or double-edged, Norse swords are typically blunt-ended. Vikings kill with the edge, and use their daggers for stabbing. To stab with a sword is considered unmanly, and is also a highly awkward action with a weapon this large and heavy.

Roman-style short swords and lightweight cavalry sabres of the eastern peoples are known but laughed at by Vikings. These don't fit their style of fighting and will usually break if wielded Norse-fashion. The Franks make good, heavy longswords, and Frankish swords are prized by Vikings and seized whenever possible.

A Viking will name his weapons and prizes them highly. However, he will give them away if he finds a better model, either by capture or trade.

Axes

From the first Viking raids, some Norse warriors wielded axes in battle. The battleaxes of the early Viking period are simply woodsman's axes, used to hew flesh instead of timber. The Norse are good woodworkers and great shipwrights and builders, and all Norse males grow up handy with an axe. As children, they were forced to cut firewood with an axe, and as adults they probably wielded axes to fell trees and shape logs for use in ships or buildings. An inexperienced Norse warrior may be quite good with an axe, as long as he or she is willing to sink it into an enemy's body. The Norse are quite willing.

Battleaxes grew more popular with Vikings as their enemies began to wear armor. Where a sword's force is distributed along its blade, the axe concentrates the blow in a small area and will shear through mail and most plate. Later Viking battleaxes are designed specifically to pierce or shatter mail armor, and they will also split shields. To use one of these fine weapons on a tree is considered boorish.

While an axe is a powerful weapon against armored foes, its weakness is on defense. Vikings like to swing their weapons two-handed, which prevents their using a shield in combination with axe or sword. A large part of the practice of arms includes turning an enemy's stroke with a sword and returning the blow (the long-sax is especially good for this since the dull side is less likely to notch or shatter in such an exchange). While an axe can turn a blow, its haft is vulnerable to break when met by an enemy's blade and leave the warrior suddenly unarmed.

There seems to be no formal assignment of weapon types, but Viking practice dictates that some but not a majority of a war-band's members should carry axes to deal with any potentially armored foes. The bulk of the war-band will carry swords because these are held to be good general-purpose weapons for facing most any resistance. The swordsmen can then help protect their axe-wielding comrades in the thick of battle.

While any Norsewoman beyond the upper crust has some experience with a wood axe, women are almost never found wielding them in battle. Only the very strongest Vikings use them, since they hope to cut down armored foes.

Shields

Where other peoples use shields purely for defense, the Vikings consider it to be a weapon. It can be used to catch an enemy's weapon on its edge, and Vikings use heavy wooden shields precisely so a foe's blade can be taken in this manner. Though a shield is heavy, many Norse warriors are strong enough to grasp it by both sides and use it to batter a smaller and weaker enemy into submission.

Vikings are big people, with many warriors standing the equivalent of six-and-a-half feet

tall or even larger. As such, they are enormously strong compared to most humans and can throw their heavy wooden shields much like a latter-day flying disk. Sailing one through the air to brain an enemy or catch him in the midsection is close to impossible, but many experienced Vikings have mastered the art of flinging their shield onto a hard surface like ice or rock. The big wooden disk then skitters along, sweeping enemies off their feet to be finished with spear thrusts.

The Norse shield is uniformly round, with a simple pattern painted on the side facing the enemy. It's a composite made of seasoned boards, usually oak, carefully cross-hatched for maximum strength. The edge is sometimes rimmed with leather or iron, but, since many warriors like to catch an enemy's weapon on the rim, this is often left as simply painted wood.

Vikings usually leave the back of the shield unadorned. Here it has a large iron handle, and often several leather straps as well. Some Vikings disdain the straps: though these help distribute the shield's heavy weight, they also make it an awkward motion to drop the shield in the heat of battle and use both hands on one's weapon or to throw the shield.

Holding a heavy oaken shield in front of one's body is an unnatural motion and requires long practice. The arm muscles tire quickly and begin to shake, and inexperienced warriors soon lower their guard. Norse women, in the rare cases when they fight, don't usually take up a shield. They simply lack the arm strength to use one well. They can be more effective using their agility and lower body strength to put both hands on a spear.

Spears

Most Norse are comfortable with the spear, using it in hunting. It's an inexpensive weapon, easy to manufacture, and has a peacetime use. Many Norse own special battle spears, separate from their hunting weapons, but the poorer Vikings bring the same instrument to war as they take on the hunt.

A typical spear has a seasoned shaft of oak or ash, often fire-hardened. The spearhead is steel, its haft attached to the shaft with iron nails. The iron will eventually cause the wood to deteriorate, exactly the point where such damage is covered by the spearhead. An old spear handed down to a young warrior may break in use, without warning.

Spearheads come in many styles. A few are remanufactured sword blades; when a greatly honored sword breaks, sometimes the owner will find a skilled smith to refashion it as a spearhead so that it may continue to drink the blood of enemies. Some are imported from the Franks, whose skill in making weapons is respected by the Vikings (though they think the Franks small and ugly, using them as the basis of the dwarf legends).

In the later part of the Viking era, many spears have cross-pieces at the foot of the spearhead. This serves several purposes: it prevents the spearhead from sinking too deeply into the flesh of an impaled enemy, so that it can quickly be withdrawn to strike again. It also allows a highly skilled warrior to catch the rim of an enemy's shield and jerk the shield out of his grasp.

Missile Weapons

Norse hunt with bow and arrow as well as the spear, and most of them are fairly good with it. The Vikings don't depend on missile fire in battle, but all Nordic armies include at least some archers for sniping. These warriors trail behind the shield-wall and target enemy leaders with their arrows.

The proportion of archers in a Viking force depends on the leader's preference. Some like them more than others and will recruit a fair number, though these are never a majority of a Viking force. Others rely on just a small handful. Almost all Vikings own a bow, and many carry the weapons with them into battle, strung and slung over their shoulder, just in case they come in handy.

Almost all Norse are good with the javelin, a light throwing spear. Olaf Trygvasson, Norway's first Christian king, is said to have been able to hurl javelins with both hands simultaneously with force and accuracy.

Armor

Nordic warriors wore heavy armor in their pre-Viking days, but this fell into disuse when they

began raiding other peoples. An armored man aboard a ship has no hope of survival if he falls overboard.

As the Vikings began to encounter armored foes, they responded in kind. By the late Viking Age they will wear fairly heavy armor. For all of the period, they rely on mail shirts, extending the skirts as the age wears on. A conical iron cap rests on their heads; use of a nose protector varies regionally.

The Vikings do not wear horned helmets or plate armor of any kind. Leather armor is also disdained. Some wear mail head protection of Frankish origin, but this is unusual. Vikings don't normally take the armor of fallen foreign enemies because the danger of being mistaken by their friends is too great.

Unlike some other peoples, Vikings wear their armor outside their tunics. Habit causes them to value quick changes, so they can put their armor on and off as they board or disembark from their ships. Armor is usually stored aboard the longships and donned only when needed, a practice that will bring more than one Viking army to grief.

Maintenance

The Viking warrior must constantly care for his weapons; in this age before stainless steel, they rust easily. A Viking will repair his gear as best he can in the field but often must turn to a blacksmith for expert help. Blacksmiths are highly honored, and, though they cannot enter Valhalla, they are held equal with warriors in societal terms. There is no formal organization of blacksmiths, but common worship of Wayland, the Smith binds them together.

All Vikings carry a whetstone and a small flask of oil, and tend their blades daily when not in battle. After combat, blood and dirt must be carefully cleaned from the blade and notches smoothed. The metal of this time is brittle, and swords notch easily from clashes with other metal weapons. Many warriors are injured by the tiny bits of metal shrapnel that fly when blades collide, and not a few have been killed when a fragment temporarily blinded them and left them vulnerable to their enemies.

Poorly-made swords will shatter in battle, and many blades lose their edge quickly. Norway's famous King Olaf Tryggvason even issued new swords to his troops in the middle of a battle to give them an edge over the enemy, so to speak.

Slaves may not touch weapons on pain of death. Some lazy Vikings order their slaves to tend their weapons anyway, putting the slave in a quandary — disobey and be killed, or obey and be killed by any other Viking who happens past.

Caring for Weapons

Steel can carry a razor's edge but loses it quickly. It also rusts at the slightest dampness. Therefore, the good warrior cares for his or her weapons regularly. To let others see a rusty sword is to invite terrible shame.

A sword must be cleaned once it is blooded. And it must be sharpened (with a sharpening stone) by shaving firmly and slowly along the cutting edge at least 100 strokes on each side (four times total for a two-edged sword). The blade must also be oiled every day using refined petroleum or plant oils.

Characters must take time to care for their weapons. After a battle, the weapon must be cleaned or it suffers a -1 Circumstance Penalty to all damage rolls. Additionally, after every three battles in which a character participates, it must be sharpened. Dull weapons inflict only half damage.

Finally, if the blade is not oiled every day, it begins to rust. This process is accelerated by not cleaning and sharpening. A weapon loses one point of Hardness each day it is not oiled. It loses an additional point if it is not cleaned. Weapons whose Hardness is reduced to 0 are completely rusted over and useless as anything but flimsy clubs. Any character caught wielding a dirty, dull, or rusty weapon suffers a -2 Penalty to all Charisma-based checks for 2d10 weeks.

Chapter 6
Norse Campaigns

A VIKING AGE campaign has certain differences from a standard fantasy RPG, owing to the fatalistic beliefs of the Norse people. This chapter gives new campaign rules and other information for GM's and players to help facilitate play.

Divine Portfolio

In most campaigns, the players each play one character. In VIKING AGE, though, they will usually play two: a Minor God and a member of the Lesser Races. Each type of character has different sorts of adventures, and both are important to the prevention of Ragnarok.

Minor God

Each player creates a Minor God from among the Aesir, Vanir, or Valkyrie races. This character is one that has been lost to history, with references to him or her possibly burned by overzealous Christian missionaries. In other words, this god has always existed and been part of the mythos; we've just never heard of him or her before.

The GM may ask the players to choose one of the Major Gods as a patron. The new character is one of the Major God's servants, and it is this patron who sends the character on his or her quests. However, this isn't strictly necessary. Thor may be the character most often written about by the Skalds, but that doesn't mean other gods didn't have adventures too.

If you do choose the patronage option, be careful which patrons you allow the players to choose. Loki and Hel are typically adversarial characters in the legends, so they may not make the best subjects for allies. Valkyries, on the other hand, have to be allied with Odin, since they do his bidding by collecting the dead and bringing the worthy to Valhalla. However, Odin is the most powerful of the gods, and you may not wish to have the characters having direct access to him

Overall, GM's should use their best judgment. Patrons can give you ready-made plot devices, so you might consider using them. They are not necessary, though.

It's important to remember that even Minor Gods are powerful. Aesir and Vanir are 5 Hit-Dice creatures before adding any character levels. Thus, a 1st Level Aesir is effectively a 6th Level character. This will allow you to have epic adventures straight away since you will have some more powerful characters. Because Valkyries are not quite as powerful as Minor Gods, you might consider letting them start with a few extra Class Levels if they are in a party with Minor Gods.

The Minor Gods' adventures are typically fantastic in scope. They can travel to all of the Nine Worlds, and they usually go to either solve problems or win something for the gods. Remember that, in the legends, the flow of goods is usually from the giants (and occasionally dwarfs and alfar) to the gods. Therefore, the characters may be off to steal something, to recover something stolen, or simply to acquire a great treasure. Treasure quests are common, but not in the typical fantasy RPG sense of a dungeon loaded with cash and magic. The adventure typically revolves around the gods winning something of great value (magical or otherwise) through overcoming terrible odds.

The adventure in Avalanche Press's DOOM OF ODIN follows this particular sequence. The gods pursue a fiery ring because they know that if it falls into the hand of a giant it will spell the end of Odin. First, though, they must learn what the ring is, and then they must fulfill a quest for a dwarf so that he will give them the key to gaining the ring. Finally, they must penetrate a secret lair that is loaded with traps to gain the object of the adventure and fight off the giant who pursues the ring himself. And, through all of it, nothing is what it seems.

A key component of most Norse quests is guile. Might in battle is important, and the characters will ultimately have to fight. However,

they should also be expected to reason their way through riddles and conundra. Outwitting a giant is as good a victory as besting him or her in battle. In fact, it's often better because it demonstrates the gods' superior intellects, reaffirming their place as lords of the universe.

As a GM, when you design your adventures, make certain to include puzzles for your characters to reason out. Reward innovative ideas and thinking through a problem. For example, in DOOM OF ODIN, the ring of fire wasn't really a ring at all, and the characters had to solve three riddles to meet the dwarf who held the key to the adventure. In addition to the battles, the riddles were also assigned Challenge Ratings so that the characters would be rewarded for solving them. You should do the same in your own campaigns.

Whatever the purpose of the quest may, on the surface, though, there is one larger issue that is always lurking behind it: prevent the onset of Ragnarok. Whatever the gods do, they are trying to preserve their place in the order of the universe. Failure at their goals is an indication that their power is fading and Ragnarok is hastening towards them. Success helps stave it off by proving that the gods belong in charge of things. Therefore, any quest the characters undertake is always important to the stability of the gods' rule. If they are simply trying to steal a trinket from a giant, this is a critical mission because it will help determine if the gods remain powerful and in charge or if they have become weak and vulnerable. Every quest is a metaphor for the health of the natural order.

The Lesser Races

The Lesser Races are played a little differently. There are a number of considerations that go into including these characters in the Divine Portfolio.

The first is the mix of characters. Humans, dwarfs, liosalfar, and svartalfar all naturally dwell on different worlds. Some can be found on a world not naturally theirs, but none have the innate ability to plane travel like the gods. Thus, it's harder for them to get together. There's nothing wrong with starting a party of mixed characters, but remember that at least one of them won't be living on his or her native world. That may bear some investigation depending on the campaign.

The types of quests in which these characters are involved differ from those of the gods as well. This is at least partially due to their inability to plane travel. Most of these campaigns are set on Midgard since humans are made in the image of the gods and are the most favored of the Lesser Races. So the question one has to ask if a liosalf is in the party is not necessarily how did he get to Midgard but how is he going to get back? A character who is not from the world on which this part of the campaign is set may well be trapped there all of his or her life.

Therefore, the adventures typically center around the politics of that world and threats made to it directly. Mortal characters engage in attempts to gain power for themselves or their lords and in quests that defend their homes. They slay monsters, they go to war, they attempt to make treaties, and, if they go on treasure quests, it is so that can make themselves or their lord more powerful.

Once again, the idea of a dungeon filled with cash and magic is not in line with the mythos. Like the gods, mortals may journey in search of a certain item, or they may try to steal gold from their enemies. But a dungeon with monsters in it is not in the realm of the legends. A monster almost always has a specific lair, and there may be treasure within it, but there not is a ruin with lots of monsters waiting for someone to conquer them.

That said, monsters do figure in the mythos, and several monsters may be working together. Treasure is rarely at the end of these quests, though. The reward and the purpose of them is to kill the creature so that the area will be safe.

Likewise, magic is never just lying around waiting to be found. It is almost always deliberately placed somewhere with several guardians. The safeguards can take the form of traps, riddles, monsters, or even a combination of all three. No Magic Item lies in a treasure horde. It must be found via a specific quest.

An exception to this rule can be a Magic Item that is found by chance. Perhaps it is on the

body of a dead person, or perhaps it was accidentally dropped down a well or into a river. A person might come upon it by accident. In such cases, a whole saga may be built around this chance discovery. In fact, J.R.R. Tolkien's Lord of the Rings epic, which draws heavily on Norse mythology, is based on just such an event. Bilbo Baggins finds the One Ring by chance. As a result, his nephew, Frodo, is drawn into a quest to destroy the ring.

Another issue with mixed parties is the fact that each race tends to pursue different agendae. Human beings typically seek glory in the name of the gods. Liosalfar pursue knowledge, particularly magical information. Svartalfar seek to affirm their independence from the gods and the giants by plaguing both, and dwarfs are typically reclusive, eschewing the company of others as they pursue their dreams of building. So if you have a party of different races, make sure everyone can get along alright. A caustic, antisocial dwarf is not going to be appreciated by anyone, nor is a scheming svartalf who is attempting to kill everyone. On the other hand, a party of dwarfs who band together to create the ultimate Magic Item (and like to see who can fire off the best insult) or a cabal of svartalfar secretly planning to unleash a monster on humanity might be a workable group. Or, you could have a mixed group of characters that are all stranded in Nifleheim and have joined forces for safety and for the purpose of finding their way home.

GM's should make it very clear what sort of campaign they want to run so that players will create characters that are suitable. If the GM wants no liosalfar in the campaign, he or she should say so, and the players should respect that.

Like Minor Gods, though, regardless of the quest at hand, Ragnarok is behind it. Good- and Lawful-Aligned characters will be trying to prevent it. Their actions reflect the will of the gods, and failure at their quests indicates that the gods are losing control of the universe since their servants cannot seem to uphold their ideals. Evil characters might be conspiring to help bring Ragnarok about (since they want a new order where they will benefit) or they might simply be pursuing their own ends (and therefore unwittingly bringing about the doom of the gods).

It's important to remember, though, that the Norse universe is a fatalistic one. Everything matters, and, since Odin's prophecy does not seem to be avertable, all events are leading to that one terrible moment. Good actions will help hold it off. Evil ones bring it on faster.

Tying It All Together

The purpose of the Divine Portfolio is to allow GM's to run a more thorough campaign mixing the epic with the mundane. High-level adventures concerning the gods can take place at the same time as lower level ones for the Lesser Races. Clever GM's can entwine these.

The mortal party can be acting as servants or minions of the gods. The players' divine characters can charge their mortal ones with quests in their name. Likewise, the mortal characters can attempt to call on the players' divine ones for aid.

A quest could be linked, with the mortals following one thread and the gods following another. Alternatively, the players could be running mortal characters working against the gods. In this way, the divine characters would be trying to prevent the mortals from succeeding or cleaning up after the messes they made. Likewise, the Lesser Race characters could be working to thwart the gods. Keep the tension up in this type of campaign by preventing the gods from learning who their nemeses are while keeping the mortals fearing that they will be found out.

How a GM organizes the Divine Portfolio is really up to him or her, but it is designed as a tool to allow a fully integrated and epic campaign. The tighter the ties between the mortal characters and the divine, the more significant all of the adventures will be, regardless of who is participating in them.

Fate Points

Because Ragnarok is always looming in the background, VIKING AGE includes a mechanic for its onset. In essence, all adventures are about preventing (or fomenting) Ragnarok. For this reason, the campaign has Fate Points.

At the beginning of the campaign, there are 5 Fate Points. The characters attempt to increase this number by successfully completing quests.

When the object of a quest is fulfilled, Fate Points go up. If the quest fails or suffers a major setback, Fate Points go down. If they ever reach 0, Ragnarok begins. The Doom of the Gods is at hand.

Table 6-1 lists the events that can gain and lose Fate Points in the campaign. It is easier to lose points than to gain them, which is in keeping with the fatalistic view of the Norse peoples. Moreover, the goal of the campaign is the prevention of Ragnarok. This aim is impossible to achieve. Odin has seen the future. He knows what will happen. The gods and their minions are really only attempting to put off the inevitable. Therefore, the campaign should eventually come to an end as the challenge of holding off the end of the world becomes insurmountable.

Divinity Points

Divinity Points are special powers of the gods that are used to help make things go more favorably. They are spent to change any one die roll to a favorable or unfavorable result. Thus, an attack roll that missed can be made to hit, and one that hit can be changed to miss. A regular hit can be changed to a Critical Hit.

A Divinity Point can only be spent once per game session. Once it is used, another one cannot be spent until the next time the campaign is played. Divinity Points are gone when they are spent. Minor Gods have a limited number of these, so they must be rationed with care. Major Gods are an exception to this rule. The major gods of the pantheon always have one Divinity Point to spend. Like Minor Gods, they can only use one per session, but they will always have one available. Minor Gods are out of luck if their supply of Divinity Points runs out.

However, Minor Gods can earn Divinity Points back. Every time the Fate Points of the campaign increases by a margin of five, the characters earn one Divinity Point. Thus, since the campaign starts at five Fate Points, when it reaches 10, the Minor Gods get a Divinity Point. Every time it reaches 10 (if it dips below this number) or if it gets up to 15 or 20, the characters earn another point.

Table 6-1: Fate Points

Event	*Fate Points*
Completion of a Mortal Quest	+1
Setback in a Mortal Quest*	-1
Failure of a Mortal Quest	-2
Completion of a Divine Quest	+3
Setback in a Divine Quest*	-2
Temporary Death of a Minor God†	-3
Temporary Death of a Major God†	-6
Death of a Valkyrie	-3
Permanent Death of a Minor God#	-5
Permanent Death of a Major God#	-10
Failure of a Divine Quest	-5

** A "setback" is defined as any temporary failure of a quest. For example, the party might run into a pack of trolls. In the course of the fight, they take a lot of damage and are forced to retreat. This is a setback to their quest and thus nets a loss of Fate Points. They may eventually defeat the trolls and move on, but they experienced the setback and must pay the Fate Point cost. Note that this can happen multiple times in a single quest.*

† "Temporary Death" means that the god was reduced to fewer than 0 Hit Points, but that this occurred somewhere other than their home plane (Asgard for Aesir; Vanaheim for Vanir). The god will eventually recover.

 # "Permanent Death" means a god was killed (reduced to -10 or fewer Hit Points) on his or her home plane (Asgard for Aesir; Vanaheim for Vanir). This is a cataclysmic event under the best of circumstances.

Table 6-2: Fortune

Mortal characters earn Fortune for the following actions:

Action	*Fortune*
Slay an enemy in single combat	2 x CR
Loot gold in adventure	1 per 100 gold
Fulfill an oath	2
Break an oath	-5
Complete a quest	3
Fail to complete a quest	-5
Save a comrade	2
Solve a puzzle	2 x CR

Mortal characters do not earn Divinity Points, but they can earn them for their Minor God patrons. Because the actions of the Lesser Races impact the total Fate Points too, succeeding at a mortal quest can earn the Minor Gods Divinity Points.

Fortune and Glory

While characters of the Lesser Races cannot earn or spend Divinity Points, they do have a slight benefit of their own. Mortal characters earn Fortune through properly emulating the behavior of the gods. Positive actions net Fortune as shown on Table 6-2.

Fortune can be turned into Glory Points. For every 10 Fortune the character earns, he or she can cash it in for one Glory Point. Once the Fortune is spent, it is gone. So a character with 11 Fortune who spends 10 of it now has 1 Glory Point and 1 Fortune.

Glory Points are used similarly to Divinity Points. There are two major differences. The first is that a Glory Point only buys a re-roll. So, where a Divinity Point can turn a failed roll automatically into a successful one, a Glory Point only lets the character try again. It can be used on any die roll, though, including those of one's opponents.

Secondly, there is no limit to the number of Glory Points that can be spent per session except the number the character has available. If a character has 5 Glory Points, he or she can spend them all in one sitting if he or she likes.

Chapter 7
Norse Characters

There are two basic types of characters in VIKING AGE: divine and mortal. Divine characters are those that are typically worshipped as gods. They have a limited form of immortality, and they usually live in Asgard or Vanaheim (see Chapter 12). Lesser Races are characters, who either worship the gods or live in fear of them. Many of them live in Midgard, but they can be found elsewhere. Dwarves, for example, are nearly always found in Nidavellir (see Chapter 12).

Within each basic character type are several races. When creating Minor God characters, players choose one of the divine races. When creating mortals, they choose from among the mortal races. Major God characters have their races predetermined. Character creation otherwise follows the method outlined in the standard game. Exceptions are noted within the racial modifiers for each race.

Divine Races

There are three divine races from which the player may choose. Each is detailed below. Note that some of the racial abilities vary depending on whether the character is a Lesser or Major God. Such differences are noted where they occur.

Aesir

Often referred to as the Scions of Odin, the Aesir are a fierce, warlike race of gods. They are noble and extol the virtues of good deeds, but the ferocity of the battlefield and its opportunities for heroism are their chief concerns. These mighty warrior-gods seek adventure and admire the brave whether they are mortal or divine. Though occasionally disposed to treachery themselves (such as when they attempted to bind the Fenris Wolf), the Aesir generally despise trickery, upholding honor as a high virtue. The Aesir make their home in Asgard, feasting nightly in the Hall of Heroes.

Racial Traits: Aesir have racial traits as noted in the sidebar on page 53. Some of the special abilities require greater explanation.

Aesir Racial Traits

- +8 Str, Con (Lesser Gods) / +10 Str, Con (Greater Gods)
- +6 Dex, Int, Wis, Cha (Lesser Gods) / +8 Dex, Int, Wis, Cha (Greater Gods)
- Weapon Focus Feat
- Combat Reflexes Feat or Power Attack Feat (player's choice)
- Base Movement of 30 feet
- Plane Travel
- Inspire
- Spell Resistance (Ex): 7 (Lesser Gods) / (Greater Gods) 13
- Cast Runes
- Fearless
- Damage Reduction (Ex): 5/+1 (Lesser Gods) / 10/+2 (Greater Gods)
- Ignore Damage Reduction: +2 or less (Lesser Gods) / +4 or less (Greater Gods)
- Rapid Healing
- Limited Immortality
- Magic Item
- Natural AC Bonus: +2 (Lesser Gods) / +5 (Greater Gods)
- Linguistics
- Granted Power
- Divinity Points: 3
- Favored Class: Any
- +5 Character Levels (Lesser Gods) / +7 Character Levels (Greater Gods)

Table 7-1: Minor God Magic Items

Armor and Shields
+2 Armor
+1 Armor and +1 Shield
+1 Shield with one Special Ability*

Weapons
+2 Weapon
+1 Weapon with one Special Ability*

Rings
Ring of Jumping
Ring of Minor Elemental Resistance
Ring of Protection +2
Ring of Swimming
Ring of the Ram
Ring of Wizardry I

Staves
Staff of Charming
Staff of Defense
Staff of Healing

Wands
Wand of Charm Person
Wand of Cure Moderate Wounds
Wand of Fireballs (3d6)†
Wand of Hold Person
Wand of Lightning Bolts (3d6)†
Wand of Magic Missiles (4d4)†
Wand of Polymorphing#
Wand of Slow

Wondrous Items
Boots of Elvenkind
Boots of Striding and Springing
Bracers of Armor +2
Cloak of Elvenkind
Cloak of Protection +2
Eyes of the Eagle
Feather Token (Any)
Handy Haversack
Necklace of Fireballs (Type III)

** See Table 7-3 for a list of suggested special abilities.*

† The number in parentheses indicates the amount of damage done by the attack.

 # This wand will perform Polymorph Self or Polymorph Other.

Free Feats (Ex): Owing to their love of battle, all Aesir have a favorite weapon. Consequently, these characters gain the Weapon Focus Feat for free. Additionally, the player may choose either Combat Reflexes or Power Attack when creating the character.

Plane Travel (Su): Aesir may travel from one of the Nine Worlds to another once per day.

Inspire (Ex): Gods inspire their mortal worshippers. If a mortal who acknowledges the gods is within visual range of the character (and is aware he or she is divine), the mortal is treated as though he or she is one character level higher than actual. Roll a temporary hit die for the character, but he or she does not gain additional Skill Points or Feats. Improvements in Base Attack Bonuses and spells per day do occur. The effect lasts so long as the god is in the affected character's presence. Once the god leaves, the character's level returns to normal.

Cast Runes (Sp): Because they are divine, Aesir characters can automatically cast Runes. Minor Gods cast three Runes per day. Major Gods may cast five. Divine characters begin the campaign knowing a number of Runes equal to their Intelligence Bonus.

Fearless (Ex): Aesir are immune to the effects of Fear.

Ignore Damage Reduction (Ex): Owing to their magical nature, Aesir are less affected by creatures with Damage Reduction. A Minor God may ignore the effects of Damage Reduction for any creature with a DR of +2 or less. That is, treat the target as though the god were striking with a +2 magical weapon. Major Gods ignore Damage Reduction of +4 or less.

Rapid Healing (Ex): Aesir heal much faster than normal. For Minor Gods, the rate is twice as fast. Major Gods heal three times the normal rate.

Limited Immortality (Ex): Prior to the onset of Ragnarok, the gods are immortal. An Aesir can only be permanently killed in Asgard. Otherwise, the character simply continues to heal until he or she recovers.

Magic Item: All gods begin the game with at least one Magic Item. However, magic is a rare and precious thing in Norse mythology. Thus, the item in question should not be overly extravagant. Table 7-1 lists typical Magic Items for Minor Gods. Table 7-2 has a list of items that would be appropriate for Major Gods. Alternatively, a Major God could choose two items off of Table 7-1. All choices should be approved by the game master before beginning play. Items with charges such as staves and wands begin play with 50 charges.

Table 7-2: Major God Magic Items

Armor and Shields
+3 Armor
+2 Armor and +1 Shield
+2 Shield with one special ability*
+1 Shield with two special abilities*

Weapons
+3 Weapon
+2 Weapon with one special ability*
+1 Weapon with two special abilities*

Rings
Ring of Protection +3
Ring of Shooting Stars
Ring of Wizardry II

Staves
Staff of Earth and Stone
Staff of Fire
Staff of Frost
Staff of Life

Wands
Wand of Cure Serious Wounds
Wand of Fireballs (5d6)†
Wand of Lightning Bolts (5d6)†

Wondrous Items
Bracers of Armor +3
Boots of Speed
Boots of the Winterlands
Horn of Blasting

** See Table 7-3 for sample special abilities.*

† The number in parentheses indicates the damage done by the attack.

Linguistics (Ex): Aesir can speak and read all languages.

Granted Power (Su): This is the special ability that the god grants to Godi who plead with him or her (see Chapter 8). It should be in line with the character's general disposition, orientation, or exploits. For example, Uller grants a bonus to ranged attacks because he is known as a great hunter.

For Minor Gods, the granted power should be beneficial but not too extravagant. Uller, for example, grants a +2 bonus to ranged attacks for three rounds. Set the range at around +2 for multiple rounds or about +4 for a single round.

The GM should work with the player to come up with an appropriate granted power for the character and the campaign. Aesir granted powers tend to have direct benefits on dice rolls, Ability scores, or Skill checks.

Divinity Points (Sp): Aesir begin the campaign with three Divinity Points. More information on Divinity Points is available in Chapter 6.

Additional Character Levels: Because they are so much tougher than mortals, Aesir start the game with extra Character Levels, using the rules for monsters as player characters from the standard game. An Aesir character begins with 5d8 Hit Points before choosing a class if it is a Minor God. Major God Aesir begin with 7d8 Hit Points. Thus, a 1st Level Aesir character is effectively a 6th Level character while that same god would be 8th Level if he or she were a Major divinity. The Base Attack Bonus for these extra levels is as a Fighter's.

Vanir

The Vanir are not nearly as warlike as their Aesir cousins. Instead, they are much more nature-oriented and are frequently tied to the natural forces of Midgard. Vanir interact with mortals much more easily than the Aesir and find nobility in the Lesser Races beyond heroism on the field of battle. Though they are

Table 7-3: Magic Item Special Abilities

Sample special abilities are given below. In some cases, a special ability may not work as well for a weapon as it might for a shield and vice versa. In these cases, two abilities are provided divided by a slash (/). The ability in front of the slash is a weapon special ability. The one behind the slash is designed for shields.

Special Abilities
+2 to Reflex Saves
+2 to Will Saves
+3 vs. Giants
+3 vs. Outsiders
Dancing
Electric/Electricity Resistance 15
Flaming/Fire Resistance 15
Frost/Cold Resistance 15
Keen/+2 to Fortitude Saves
Thundering/Absorption

Some special abilities require further information not provided in the standard game. These are listed below.

Absorption: The shield can absorb some of the damage that the character incurs in battle. When the character takes damage, he or she rolls 1d6 and subtracts the result from the total damage sustained. The amount subtracted is added to the shield's total. The shield can absorb only so much damage per day, however. The amount it can take is 24 + the Constitution Bonus of the wielder. Once it has reached this total, it cannot take any more for that day. If it does take more damage (the character is wielding it when he or she takes damage again), the character must make a Fortitude Save at DC 25. If this Saving Throw is failed, the shield releases all of the damage that it has stored into the wielder immediately. It is, however, empty and able to begin absorbing damage again.

Electric: Upon command, the weapon becomes sheathed in crackling electricity. The electricity adds an additional 1d4 points of damage to the weapon's attack when it hits. Additionally, the character may command the weapon to fire a lightning bolt as a ranged attack, which does 2d6 points of damage if it hits. The range of this attack is 50 feet, and it can be used a number of times per day equal to the wielder's Wisdom Bonus.

more even-tempered, they can be roused to anger and are terrible foes in such circumstances. The Vanir officially reside in Vanaheim, but many make their homes elsewhere.

Racial Traits: Vanir have racial traits denoted in the sidebar on page 58. Some of them require fuller explanation and are detailed below.

Plane Travel (Su): Vanir may move from one world to another once per day.

Inspire (Ex): Like the Aesir, the Vanir can inspire those mortals who acknowledge them as gods. The mortal is considered one level higher when in the presence of the god, receiving a temporary extra Hit Die. The effect vanishes when the Vanir leaves.

Cast Runes (Sp): The Vanir are not quite as proficient with Runes as their Aesir cousins. Minor Vanir may cast one Rune a day. Major God Vanir may cast three. A god starts with a number of Runes equal to his or her Intelligence Bonus.

Spell Package (Sp): All Vanir have certain Spell-like Abilities owing to their affinity with nature. When creating the character, the player should choose whether the god will focus on animals, plants, or elements. He or she then receives a number of spells listed on Table 7-4.

Fearless (Ex): Vanir cannot be affected by Fear.

Rapid Healing (Ex): Vanir heal twice as fast as usual if they are Minor Gods. Major Gods heal three times as fast.

Limited Immortality (Ex): Until the Doom of the Gods, Vanir can only truly be killed in Vanaheim. If they are reduced to less than 0 hit points on any of the other Nine Worlds, they simply continue to heal until they are able to act again.

Magic Item: Like Aesir, Vanir characters begin the game with a Magic Item. Use Tables 7-1 through 7-3 to determine the nature of this item.

Granted Power (Su): This ability is the same as that with the Aesir with one exception. Vanir granted powers tend to have to do with nature and provide indirect benefits. For example, Nerthus grants her Godi the ability to cast Goodberry, thus nourishing themselves and their companions. There are exceptions such as Uller's bonus to ranged attacks, but, for the most part, Vanir grant benefits from nature.

Divinity Points (Sp): Vanir begin the campaign with two Divinity Points. Divinity Points are described in detail in Chapter 6.

Additional Character Levels: Vanir are much more powerful than mortal characters and therefore garner additional Hit Dice per the rules for monsters as player characters from the standard game. Minor God Vanir begin the game with 5d8 extra Hit Points while Greater Vanir have 7d8. Their Base Attack Bonus for these levels is as a Cleric's.

Valkyrie

The Valkyries were created by Odin and serve him loyally, but they are not truly gods in the same sense as the Minor and Major Gods are. They are more accurately demigods, lacking all of the powers of even the Minor Aesir and Vanir. They remain powerful creatures, however, with whom a wise person does not trifle.

Table 7-4: Vanir Spells

When creating a Vanir character, the player selects one of the packages below. Each details the spells the character receives and the frequency with which they may be cast.

Animal Package

Spell	*Frequency*
Animal Messenger	3/Day
Calm Animals	3/Day
Speak with Animals	At Will
Summon Nature's Ally I	2/Day
Summon Nature's Ally II	1/Day

Plant Package

Spell	*Frequency*
Entangle	3/Day
Goodberry	1/Day
Plant Growth	3/Day
Speak with Plants	At Will
Tree Shape	3/Day

Element Package

Spell	*Frequency*
Light	At Will
Obscuring Mist/Pass without Trace*	3/Day
Resist Elements	2/Day
Soften Earth and Stone	3/Day
Choose one:	1/Day

- Call Lightning
- Control Water
- Flame Strike
- Wall of Stone

** The character may cast either spell, but cannot exceed three times per day. Thus, he or she could cast one spell twice and the other once or one of them three times per day.*

All Valkyries are female. They are beautiful warriors whose job it is to inspire mortals to greatness and to conduct the worthy fallen to Valhalla. While not technically Aesir themselves, they cherish the Aesir ideals of heroism and battlefield greatness. Consequently, they frequently encourage mortals to take up arms for the purposes of winning glory for themselves and for the gods.

Odin has specifically tasked Valkyries with finding the heroic fallen and bringing them to Valhalla. Those who die bravely and those who win glory in Odin's name are brought to the great hall in Asgard. There, they battle during the day and feast at night all in preparation for the final battle of Ragnarok, when they will fight at Odin's side. The most worthy of these are chosen to be *Einheriar*, the elite guard assigned to Odin and Freya.

Game masters may wish to reserve Valkyries as NPC's in their campaigns because the mighty warriors are always pledged to the service of Odin. Thus, they cannot choose to have another of the Major Gods as their patron in the Divine Portfolio. Still, the GM may choose to run a Valkyrie campaign or allow Valkyries to act in concert with the Minor God devotees of other deities so long as they are acting upon Odin's directives. Valkyries must be of Good alignment.

Valkyrie Racial Traits

- +6 Str, Cha
- +4 Dex, Con, Int, Wis
- Weapon Focus Feat
- Base Movement of 30'
- Plane Travel
- Charm Person
- Spell Resistance 5
- Cast Runes
- Fearless
- Damage Reduction (Ex) 5/+1
- Linguistics
- Quintessence
- Odin's Champion
- Favored Class: Fighter
- +3 Character Levels

Vanir Racial Traits

- +8 Dex, Wis, Cha (Lesser God) / +10 Dex, Wis, Cha (Greater God)
- +6 Int, Str, Con (Lesser God) / +8 Int, Str, Con (Greater God)
- +4 Racial Bonus to the following skill checks: Handle Animal, Heal, Knowledge (Nature), and Wilderness Lore
- Base movement of 30"
- Plane Travel
- Inspire
- Spell Resistance (Ex): 10 (Lesser God) / 15 (Greater God)
- Cast Runes
- Spell Package (choose one from Table 7-4)
- Damage Reduction (Ex): 5/+1 (Lesser God) / 10/+2 (Greater God)
- Rapid Healing
- Limited Immortality
- Magic Item
- Natural AC Bonus: +1 (Lesser God) / +3 (Greater Gods)
- Linguistics
- Granted Power
- Divinity Points: 2
- Favored Class: Any
- +5 Character Levels (Lesser Gods) / +7 Character Levels (Greater Gods)

Racial Traits: Valkyries have Racial Traits according to the sidebar above. Some need fuller explanations, which are given below.

Weapon Focus Feat (Ex): In accordance with their adherence to the Aesir values of battlefield

heroism, Valkyries gain the Weapon Focus Feat for free.

Plane Travel (Su): Once per day a Valkyrie can travel from one of the Nine Worlds to another.

Charm Person (Sp): A Valkyrie can cast Charm Person once per day for every three character levels she possesses as though she were a 5th Level Arcane spellcaster.

Cast Runes (Sp): Valkyries can cast Runes like the other gods, but they do not possess a strong command of them. A Valkyrie may only cast one rune per day.

Fearless (Ex): Like the rest of the gods, Valkyries are immune to the effects of Fear.

Linguistics (Ex): Valkyries speak and read all languages.

Quintessence (Ex): Valkyries are the epitome of the great warrior. This includes the weapons they wield and how they use them. Valkyries begin the game with masterwork weapons and armor of their choice. In addition, any weapon a Valkyrie picks up is considered masterwork for purposes of its quality and bonuses so long as she is wielding it.

Odin's Champion (Sp): This powerful ability allows the Valkyrie to select a particularly heroic mortal for infusion with divine fury for several rounds. The target strikes with +10 on all attack rolls for a number of rounds equal to his or her Constitution score. When the duration expires, the subject dies having been ravaged by the divine energies coursing through him or her. The target character is transported to Valhalla afterwards to take his or her place among the honored dead. The subject must be willing to become Odin's Champion, though only a coward unworthy of Valhalla would decline. The Valkyrie may only use this ability once per day.

Additional Character Levels: While not as tough as most gods, a Valkyrie is still much more powerful than a mortal. All Valkyries begin the game with 3d8 additional Hit Points. They gain three extra Character Levels to go with these Hit Points, using the rules for monsters as player characters from the standard game. The Base Attack Bonus for these Hit Dice is as a Fighter's.

Female Characters

While the Viking Age is definitely a man's world, there is great precedent among the legends for female heroes. A woman would be an unusual character in a party of adventurers, but not necessarily unheard of.

However, the biology of men and women is different. Thus, female characters have the following racial traits (in addition to those of their individual race):

- -2 Strength
- +2 Constitution

Further, females are rare among the alfar and extremely rare for dwarfs. Any character of those races who is a woman would be considered unusual and/or exceptional indeed.

The Lesser Races

The Lesser Races are those that lack the spark of divinity. They worship the gods or work alongside them, but they do not equal them in any way. The gods are beyond these creatures. All of them, though, have distinct societies and are intelligent. While they lack the power of the gods, they certainly can be their equal in grace and courage.

Players create characters from the Lesser Races to fill out their Divine Portfolios. Before selecting a race, though, players should consult with their game masters. Most of the adventures for the lower tier of the Divine Portfolio occur on Midgard, which is really only home to human beings. Alfar and dwarfs may not fit in well. Moreover, none of the Lesser Races can travel between worlds naturally like the gods. Thus, they must have a spell or Magic Item that allows them to do so. Keep this in mind when determining how a party of mixed races might come together.

The races listed below replace those in the standard game. Thus, despite the fact that there are

Liosalfar Racial Traits

- +2 Dexterity
- +2 Charisma
- - 2 Constitution
- Base movement of 30 feet
- Improved Initiative Feat
- Spells - Detect Magic, at will; Light, 3/Day; Flare 1/Day
- Favored Class: Magician

dwarfs and human beings in the standard game, use the Racial Traits and abilities listed here for a VIKING AGE campaign.

Alf

Most fantasy games draw their image of elves from Tolkien, who in turn drew heavily on Norse mythology. However, the elves from the standard game are not quite accurate for the setting, so VIKING AGE replaces them with the Alf (pl. Alfar). Like their more familiar cousins, Alfar are tall and willowy. They average about six feet in height, have long limbs, and narrow faces. Average weight is about 150 to 160 lbs.

There are two kinds of Alfar: the liosalfar, or "Light Elves," and the svartalfar, or "Dark Elves." Each is described below.

Liosalfar: Liosalfar are very beautiful. They have pure white skin that glows softly in the sunlight. Their eyes are typically blue or green, and they have long, blonde or red hair. Liosalfar are insatiably curious. They wish to know as much about the world as they can. They are especially interested in magic, finding it entirely fascinating. They are very adept at it, excelling at it more naturally than human beings.

The liosalfar are well-disposed towards humanity. They are usually willing to help human beings. They recognize in humanity the image of the gods, and thus feel as though they should offer whatever assistance to humans they can.

The liosalfar were created by Frey and enjoy his special protection. Most Liosalfar find themselves more inclined towards the nature-oriented Vanir than the warlike Aesir. They are gentle beings who prefer to contemplate the mysteries of the universe over warring with the giants and other enemies of the gods. They are not pacifists, though, and will fight savagely to protect their homes and any ideals they hold dear. Liosalfar have Racial Traits according to the sidebar on this page.

Svartalfar: These alfar are very unlike their light-skinned cousins. They live underground in Svartalfheim, a dark and dangerous land for those enter carelessly. Most svartalfar hate human beings for the same reason that liosalfar love them: they resemble the gods. Svartalfar are constantly used as pawns in the struggle between the gods and the giants. They resent this immeasurably. Thus, they seek to bring ruin and sorrow wherever they can out of spite.

Where liosalfar have beautiful white skin, a svartalf's is pitch black. Their eyes are red or yellow, and their hair is long but either white or black. Their faces seem to be cast in a perpetual scowl as they broadcast their hatred to anyone who looks at them.

Svartalfar are particularly adept at the creation of magic weapons. The giants and, to a lesser extent, the gods employ them for making such things in their cold war. The craftsmanship of

Svartalfar Racial Traits

- +2 Dexterity
- +2 Intelligence
- -2 Constitution
- -2 Charisma
- Base movement of 30 feet
- Craft Magic Arms and Armor Feat
- Darkvision
- Spells - Detect Magic, At Will; Darkness, 3/Day; Daze, 1/Day
- Favored Class: Rogue

these weapons is especially keen, and svartalfar lack the dwarf ability to curse the items they make. Thus, it is easier to cheat them. Such behavior only serves to deepen their resentment for both races.

They live below ground in the dark world of Svartalfheim. Here, they make their plans of revenge against everyone. Such plots only rarely come to fruition, though. More often, svartalfar become embroiled in the plans of others.

Svartalfar grew from the maggots that ate the flesh of the dead giant, Ymir, a fact that some say accounts for their hostile personalities. They have Racial Traits according to the sidebar on page 60.

Dwarf

Like elves, the fantasy dwarf has strong roots in Norse mythology. Again, though, what we know today as a dwarf bears a stronger resemblance to Tolkien than to what is found in Viking poetry.

The dwarfs were formed from the blood of slain Mimir. They have dour, antisocial personalities and prefer to live alone. They do not like the company of others, even other dwarfs. One who joins a party of adventurers or even who ventures too far outside his or her home is rare indeed.

Dwarf Racial Traits

- +2 Constitution
- -4 Charisma
- Base movement of 20 feet
- Darkvision
- Bestow Curse
- Favored Class: Artificer

There are very few female dwarfs. Of these, only a small percentage can produce offspring. Why either of these facts is true, no one knows for certain, but some have jested that it explains why dwarfs are always in a foul mood. To reproduce, dwarfs capture or bargain for females of other species. The preferred race is human, since human women are beautiful and made in the image of the gods. Liosalfar are next most preferred with svartalfar women being considered less desirable. When a dwarf is contracted to make something (see below), he often requires a mate as part of his payment.

None of this would matter much to any of the races in the Nine Worlds if dwarfs were not the finest craftsmen in the universe. Their mastery of magic and their ability to create beautiful and enchanted items puts them in demand, especially among the gods. Most of the great magical items in the mythos are created by dwarfs. They are responsible for such magnificent things such as Odin's ring, Draupnir, and Thor's hammer, Mjolnir. Unlike the svartalfar, dwarfs are seldom swindled. They affix horrible curses to everything they make, which are designed to "go off" if the price is not properly paid (see below).

Dwarfs are painfully ugly. They have twisted visages, small, frail bodies, and crow's feet. They do not move well and prefer to stay in their labs, forging their intricate items.

Racial Traits: Dwarfs have Racial Traits as shown in the sidebar on this page. One of them, Bestow Curse, requires further explanation.

Bestow Curse (Sp): Almost no one crosses a dwarf when paying for a commissioned item. The reason is simple: dwarfs trap all of the things that they make with horrible curses. Those who steal them or misuse them find themselves the victim of these sinister safeguards.

Curses come in four basic varieties as determined by their severity. These are minor, moderate, major, and debilitating. The more severe the curse, the worse its effects are on the person who sets it off. All dwarfs may lay a minor curse on any item they make or own. For the most part, these sorts of things are confined to commissioned Magic Items, but it may extend to favored possessions. Sometimes a dwarf will lay a curse on a favorite cloak or a treasured brooch, just to harm anyone who ever takes it away.

To Bestow Curse, the dwarf makes a Will Save at DC 15. He or she then designates what the curse will be (see the minor curses section of Table 7-5). The trigger is almost always "if it is stolen from the rightful owner," which enables

Table 7-5: Sample Dwarf Curses

The curses listed below are samples for you to both use and inspire your own ideas. Feel free to roll randomly on these charts to generate a curse or make one up of your own creation.

Minor Curses

- Subject breaks out in hives whenever using the item. 1 point of Constitution Damage.
- Subject forgets the command word whenever trying to use item. Make an Intelligence check at DC 10 + the level of the Dwarf that created the item to use it.
- Item turns invisible whenever the character wants to use it. Subject must make a Wisdom check at DC 10 + the level of the Dwarf who created the item to find it before it can be used.
- Item becomes extremely hot as though under the effects of a Heat Metal spell whenever it is used. In addition to taking damage, the wielder must make a Reflex Save at DC 10 + the level of the Dwarf who created the item or drop it reflexively, thereby negating its use.
- Whenever the wielder encounters someone new, the item loudly announces its presence and either warns the newcomer about how powerful and dangerous it is or how valuable and wonderful it is, thereby encouraging the stranger to steal it.
- Anyone who sees the item instantly covets it and desires to have it for himself or herself. Such characters may make a Will Save at DC 10 + the level of the Dwarf who made the item to resist such impulses.

Moderate Curses

- Anyone who meets the character becomes a sycophantic devotee, following the character everywhere and getting in his or her way or becomes obsessed with the character's destruction and dedicates all of his or her time to accomplishing this end. When the character meets the wielder for the first time, he or she is allowed a Will Save at 15 + the Level of the Dwarf who created the item to resist these urges.
- Using the item causes the character to become ill as though he or she had been poisoned. The wielder takes 1d6 points of Constitution damage and is sick for the rest of the day. Treat him or her as though the character were Fatigued.
- The item refuses to work when activated. It must be persuaded to do so. Persuasion involves the character making a Diplomacy check at DC 15 in which he or she more or less asks, begs, or cajoles the thing to do what it is supposed to. Performing this check is a Full Action.
- Whenever the character is in battle, the item talks to his or her opponent in a language the foe understands, explaining the wielder's moves and giving hints on what he or she will do next. All opponents who can hear and understand gain a +2 Circumstance Bonus both to their AC and their attack rolls as a result.

Table 7-5: Sample Dwarf Curses (cont.)

- The item is hard to hold. Whenever the character touches it, he or she must make a Dexterity check at a DC of 15 or the item slips from his or her grasp.
- The item has multiple command words. The wielder may know them all, but there is no telling which one will work on any given use. Roll randomly to determine which command word is correct each time, and then make the user guess. While the wielder will eventually guess right by process of elimination, each incorrect guess means that the item doesn't work that round.

Major Curses

- Using the item causes serious illness. It deals 2d6 points of Constitution damage to the wielder and makes him or her sick for three days. The first day, the character is Nauseated. He or she is Fatigued for the next two.
- The item duplicates any ill effects aimed at a target on the wielder. Thus, a magical sword, for example, deals damage to both the target of the sword and the user, inflicting an equal amount of punishment on both.
- Whatever the wielder is attempting to accomplish with the item somehow goes wrong. A healing spell targets an enemy instead of a friend, a love potion causes everyone but the target to fall in love with the user, or a lightning bolt makes an enemy more powerful instead of hurting it. Whatever the item is designed to do, it does. It just always manages to work out in the worst way for the user.
- The command word to operate the item changes every time it is used. Note that this is different from having multiple but a finite number of command words as in the moderate curse. Every single time the item is used, it generates a new command word that must be invoked to use it the next time. This makes using it more than once extremely difficult.

Debilitating Curses

- The item attempts to kill the user whenever it is activated. It deals 3d6 points of Constitution damage and leaves him or her Nauseated for three days. The character is Fatigued for another four days afterwards.
- The item reflects any ill effects back at the wielder. Thus, a Wand of Fireballs, for example, shoots the Fireball back at the wielder instead of the target.
- The Magic Item vanishes when used instead of doing what it is supposed to do. When the command word is spoken or its use is otherwise triggered, the device simply vanishes into thin air, teleporting itself somewhere else to be found by another person.

the dwarf to safeguard being swindled in a deal (since cheating him would be taking the item from its rightful owner). Such curses can be sinister because if the item lawfully passes to a new owner, then the next person who steals it would invoke the curse even though it wasn't stolen from the dwarf who created it.

When a dwarf reaches 5th Level (Character Level), he can bestow moderate curses. The DC for the Will Save is 20. At 10th Level, major curses are possible with a DC of 25, and at 16th Level, a debilitating curse may be placed on an object. The dwarf always retains the ability to place a curse of a lesser severity than the highest one of which he is capable, but few do since they are bitter creatures with little love for anyone else. A dwarf may lay one minor curse a week, one moderate curse a month, one major curse every three months, and one debilitating curse every six months.

Human Being

In some ways, human beings are at the center of the Nine Worlds. They are made in the image of the gods and invested with all of the qualities that the gods hold dear. For that reason, they are loved by the liosalfar and are reviled by the svartalfar, giants, and, to a lesser extent, the dwarfs.

They are favored by the gods when they are heroic and kind. While they do not necessarily benefit from special protection, both the Aesir and Vanir take it seriously when humanity is threatened by others.

Humanity's great advantages are its versatility, its cunning, and its intelligence. Human beings are crafty and clever, and they often come up with solutions that take even the gods by surprise. They do not take well to magic, they cannot transform themselves into other creatures, and they don't have special powers. They are simply very smart, and good at adapting to changing situations. In this regard, they have the potential to be greater than the gods, and it is not surprising that they survive Ragnarok according to legends.

They have a wide variety of personalities. Most subscribe to the tenets of courage and heroism espoused by the Aesir, but they can sink to the greatest depths of depravity as well. They are not as beautiful as alfar, but they are otherwise the most attractive of the Lesser Races. Human beings have Racial Traits as indicated in the sidebar on this page.

Human Racial Traits

- +2 Intelligence
- +2 Wisdom
- Base Movement of 30 feet
- Bonus Feat at 1st Level
- +4 Skill Points at 1st Level
- +1 Skill Point per level after 1st
- Favored Class: Any

Chapter 8
Viking Character Classes

This chapter includes the classes that are available in a VIKING AGE campaign. Most classes from the standard game are not allowed. They simply don't fit well into the Norse mythos or a more culturally accurate one replaces them here.

The following classes from the standard game, then, are not allowed in VIKING AGE: Barbarian, Bard, Cleric, Druid, Monk, Paladin, Sorcerer, and Wizard. The Shadow Dancer and Blackguard Prestige Classes are also not available.

The classes listed below are new ones that are designed specifically for this setting. They either are brand new or they replace one of the classes from the standard game. Some classes below have restrictions placed on them as though they were Prestige Classes. These restrictions always have to do with race or sex. The classes are otherwise considered standard ones available to all characters at the outset of their careers. In addition to the new classes listed below, the following classes from the standard game are available in VIKING AGE: Fighter, Ranger, and Rogue.

Artificer

The Artificer is a special kind of Magician. While this class casts spells just like a Magician does (see below), he or she focuses on creating Magic Items. The Artificer learns his or her spells with an eye towards imbuing objects with their power.

Artificers are highly respected throughout the Nine Worlds, especially outside of Midgard. The gods and the giants alike call upon Artificers to craft weapons and other tools for them in their ongoing struggle. This allows a character of this class to make a fine living, for such things are always expensive to create and such costs are passed on to the buyer. Dwarfs tend to be better at this trade than alfar owing to the former's ability to curse items. Alfar, particularly svartalfar, tend to get cheated more often. Human beings cannot be Artificers. They are too much like the gods, who have no understanding of such things.

An Artificer is not the easiest character to integrate into a party of adventurers, but they can work well. Their spell-casting abilities make them nearly as effective as Magicians, and many go on quests to find the raw materials they need to create something for a client. In fact, an entire campaign can be built around an Artificer's struggle to complete a contract. He or she must journey looking for rare components, and, of course, the contract could be changed by the client just as it was nearing its completion.

Requirements: Alf or Dwarf

Hit Die: d4

Skill Points at 1st Level: (6 + Int Modifier) x 4

Skill Points at Each Additional Level: 6 + Intelligence Modifier

Class Skills: Alchemy, Appraise, Concentration, Craft, Decipher Script, Disable Magical Device, Gather Information, Knowledge (Any), Runecraft, Spellcraft

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: Artificers are proficient with Simple Weapons.

Class Features: The Artificer gains class features at a rate shown on Table 8-1. These features are described below.

Arcane Understanding (Ex): Because they specialize in crafting Magic Items, the Artificer has greater understanding than a Magician of how to imbue an object with magical properties. These characters may ignore the level requirement in the prerequisite for any Item Creation Feat. The character must otherwise meet all requirements of the Feat to be able to create the item in question.

Spell-casting (Sp): Like their Magician cousins (see below) Artificers are able to cast magical spells. This is done the same as in the standard game, with the Artificer casting Arcane Spells, except that the character's staff substitutes as a

Table 8-1: Artificer Class Features

Level	*Attack*	*Fort*	*Ref*	*Will*	*Class Features*
1	+0	+0	+0	+2	Arcane Understanding; Spell-casting; Inscribe Runes
2	+1	+0	+0	+3	
3	+1	+1	+1	+3	Temporary Enchantment
4	+2	+1	+1	+4	
5	+2	+1	+1	+4	Bonus Item Creation Feat
6	+3	+2	+2	+5	
7	+3	+2	+2	+5	Alter Item
8	+4	+2	+2	+6	
9	+4	+3	+3	+6	Transfer
10	+5	+3	+3	+7	
11	+5	+3	+3	+7	Reforge
12	+6/+1	+4	+4	+8	
13	+6/+1	+4	+4	+8	Bonus Item Creation Feat
14	+7/+2	+4	+4	+9	
15	+7/+2	+5	+5	+9	
16	+8/+3	+5	+5	+10	Efficient Enchantment
17	+8/+3	+5	+5	+10	
18	+9/+4	+6	+6	+11	
19	+9/+4	+6	+6	+11	Bonus Item Creation Feat
20	+10/+5	+6	+6	+12	

focus for any material components listed in the spell's description. An Artificer may cast 0-Level spells without his or her staff. All other spells require the staff to work. The Artificer must hold the staff and gesture as appropriate. Arcane Spell Failure as a result of wearing armor applies just like in the standard game.

Like a Wizard, the Saving Throw for all spells cast is 10 + the spell's level + the Artificer's Intelligence Bonus. Also like Wizards, the Artificer must have an Intelligence of 10 + the spell's level to be able to cast it. At the beginning of play, an Artificer knows eight 0-Level Arcane Spells and three 1st Level spells of his or her choice. The character knows additional spells based on his or her Intelligence Bonus per the rules from the standard game. When the Artificer goes up in level, he or she learns one new 0-Level spell and one new spell for each spell level to which he or she has access. However, the maximum number of a spells an Artificer can learn per level increase is three plus the 0-Level one.

Inscribe Rune (Sp): This is the process by which an Artificer infuses his or her staff with power. Each time he or she learns a new spell, the character burns the specific magical runes necessary to invoke the spell into the staff. This is done via wood-burning, and it must be done with precision. To make the inscription, the character makes a Reflex Save at a DC of 10 + the level of the spell. As long as it is successful, the runes are properly inscribed. If it is failed, the work is ruined and the spell cannot be cast from the staff as is. The Artificer cannot learn that spell until the next level, when he or she can try to properly inscribe it again. The GM has the option to make this Saving Throw secretly so that the player will not know if he or she got it right until the character tries to use the spell.

Temporary Enchantment (Sp): The Artificer has learned how to temporarily add magic to a weapon or armor. The character may cast Mage Armor or Magic Weapon a number of times per day equal to his or her Intelligence Bonus. This ability works in addition to the character's regular allotment of spells and does not require the Artificer to use his or her staff.

Bonus Item Creation Feat (Sp): Each time the

character gains this ability, he or she may choose a new Feat at no cost, however, the Feat must be an Item Creation one.

Alter Item (Sp): Sometimes a Magic Item doesn't quite fit the owner, usually because it was made for someone else. This ability allows the character to make minor alterations to the object so that it will be more useful to the current owner. Thus, a short sword can be altered to become a longsword, a pair of boots made for a giant can be resized for an alf, etc. The change must keep the relative form of the item in question and cannot be a radical departure. Thus, a character can't alter a short sword to be a battleaxe or change boots into a cloak. That requires the Reforge ability below.

To use this ability, the character must make a Craft check at DC 25. If it is successful, the alteration comes off just as planned. If it fails, the item is ruined.

Transfer (Sp): This ability allows the Artificer to have another person share the experience cost of creating a Magic Item, typically the person who commissioned its creation. The maximum number is half the amount of required experience. The other person must be willing to do so and may not be under any form of magical or mundane compulsion.

Reforge (Sp): This ability works exactly the same as Alter Item except that radical changes can now be made. A sword can be made into a battle axe, a Ring of Protection could become a Cloak of Protection, etc. The basic properties of the Magic Item must be kept, but the shape the item is in can be completely altered. The DC for the Craft check is once again 25, and if it fails, the item is ruined.

Efficient Enchantment (Ex): Because the Artificer has become so proficient at item creation, spells count as one level lower (minimum zero) for the purposes of determining costs when enchanting an item.

Berserker

While any character that buys the Berserk Feat (see Chapter 9) can go insane in battle, the

Table 8-2: Artificer Spell Progression

Spells per Day

Level	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1	3	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
2	3	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
3	4	2	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
4	4	2	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
5	4	3	2	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
6	4	3	2	2	-	-	-	-	-	-
7	4	3	3	2	1	-	-	-	-	-
8	4	3	3	2	2	-	-	-	-	-
9	4	4	3	3	2	1	-	-	-	-
10	4	4	3	3	2	2	-	-	-	-
11	4	4	4	3	3	2	1	-	-	-
12	4	4	4	3	3	2	2	-	-	-
13	4	4	4	4	3	3	2	1	-	-
14	4	4	4	4	3	3	2	2	-	-
15	4	4	4	4	4	3	3	2	1	-
16	4	4	4	4	4	3	3	2	2	-
17	4	4	4	4	4	4	3	3	2	1
18	4	4	4	4	4	4	3	3	2	2
19	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	3	3	2
20	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	3	3	2

Berserker is a unique class of character that specializes in this type of savage warfare. This archetype is the inspiration for the Barbarian class from the standard game, and the Berserker is a more culturally accurate version of that class intended to replace the Barbarian in this setting.

Berserkers are feared all across Midgard due to their savagery and their absolute fearlessness. They work themselves into a frenzy prior to a battle's beginning so that they may charge headlong into combat against the enemies of their jarl. A lord with an army of Berserkers is extremely powerful because he not only has a formidable weapon at his disposable, others are afraid to fight such terrors.

Berserkers can come from either sex of any of the Lesser Races, but women tend to gravitate more towards this class than men. The reason for this is the barbaric nature of a Berserker's combat. Men wish to fight with courage and honor. They greatly respect the power and the fury of a berserk warrior, but they also see in it a kind of barbarism. To go insane and then fling oneself into battle is effective, but is it as courageous since one has no idea what one is doing while insane? Many men wonder and, thus, they prefer to leave this sort of warfare to women. Of course, they never fail to accept a Berserker's help when there's fighting to be done.

One of the aspects that leads to the Berserkers' reputation is their unwillingness to wear armor. They will wear bearskins or wolfskins, and some of them fight bare-chested. However, the only armor they will carry is a shield. They value fighting as unencumbered as possible because it aids them in their movement and in cutting an imposing figure to their opponents. A Berserker cannot wear armor if he or she wants to be able to use the Class Features listed below.

Berserkers make good adventurers owing to their combat abilities. Despite the prejudice against their methods, most parties are happy to have one in their midst. While a Berserker can always find work for a jarl, some desire

Table 8-3: Berserker Class Features

Level	*Attack*	*Fort*	*Ref*	*Will*	*Class Features*
1	+1	+2	+0	+0	Berserk Feat; Female Fury
2	+2	+3	+0	+0	Fear 1/Day
3	+3	+3	+1	+1	
4	+4	+4	+1	+1	Ignore Wounds 1/Day
5	+5	+4	+1	+1	Berserk Bonus
6	+6/+1	+5	+2	+2	
7	+7/+2	+5	+2	+2	Fear 2/Day
8	+8/+3	+6	+2	+2	Ignore Wounds 2/Day
9	+9/+4	+6	+3	+3	
10	+10/+5	+7	+3	+3	Berserk Bonus
11	+11/+6/+1	+7	+3	+3	Battle Fury 1/Day
12	+12/+7/+2	+8	+4	+4	
13	+13/+8/+3	+8	+4	+4	Fear 3/ Day
14	+14/+9/+4	+9	+4	+4	Ignore Wounds 3/Day
15	+15/+10/+5	+9	+5	+5	
16	+16/+11/+6/+1	+10	+5	+5	Berserk Bonus
17	+17/+12/+7/+2	+10	+5	+5	Battle Fury 2/Day
18	+18/+13/+8/+3	+11	+6	+6	
19	+19/+14/+9/+4	+11	+6	+6	Berserk Bonus
20	+20/+15/+10/+5	+12	+6	+6	Battle Fury 3/Day

more freedom and hire themselves out or simply seek adventure.

Requirements: Lesser Race, Constitution 12+, May not be of Lawful Alignment

Hit Die: d12

Skill Points at 1st Level: (2 + Int Modifier) x 4

Skill Points at Each Additional Level: 2 + Intelligence Modifier

Class Skills: Intimidate, Intuit Direction, Jump, Ride

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: Berserkers are proficient with all Simple and Martial Weapons. They may not wear armor but can use shields.

Class Features: Berserkers gain Class Features at a rate shown on Table 8-3. The features themselves are described below.

Berserk Feat (Ex): Berserkers gain this Feat for free when they start the class. Note that the character must meet the prerequisite of a 12+ Constitution.

Female Fury (Ex): To reflect the fact that more women than men gravitate to this class, female Berserkers may gain an additional +2 bonus to Strength when they go berserk at the cost of an additional -1 penalty to Armor Class. See the Berserk Feat in Chapter 9 for more details.

Battle Lust (Ex): Because Berserkers are practiced at going insane prior to fighting, they gain a +2 Class Bonus to all Will Saves aimed either at entering a berserk fury, exiting it, or differentiating friends from foes while enraged. Thus, a Berserker need only make a Will Save at DC 10 (15 if already in combat) to go berserk and at DC 15 to end the rage. More details on going berserk can be found in the Berserk Feat in Chapter 9.

Fear (Su): The legends of Berserkers in battle are terrifying, and the awe that these characters inspire is no small thing. Consequently, Berserker characters can inspire Fear in their opponents as though the targets were under the effects of the Arcane spell of the same name cast by a magician of caster level equal to the character's Class Level. Using this ability is a Standard Action. Table 8-3 indicates how many times it can be used per day.

Ignore Wounds (Sp): The Berserker may now shake off damage and ignore pain to a higher degree than ever before. As a Full Action, the character makes a Will Save to heal damage. The DC for this check is equal to 5 + the total number of Hit Points to be recovered. Table 8-3 indicates how many times per day this ability may be used. The maximum number of Hit Points that may be recovered in this way is 10 + the character's Constitution Bonus.

Berserk Bonus (Ex): Each time the character gains this Class Feature, he or she may use the Berserk Feat one extra time per day. This is in addition to the number of times the character can use it as determined by his or her Constitution Bonus. Thus, a 10th Level Berserker with a Constitution of 16 may go berserk four times a day (twice for half his or her Constitution Bonus of +3 and twice for his or her two levels of Berserk Bonus).

Battle Fury (Ex): The greatest Berserk warriors are nearly impossible to kill. Once they enter into battle, they lose themselves in fighting, often continuing on long past the time when a normal person would simply succumb. When in a berserk rage, the character can sustain damage past 0 Hit Points to a total equal to 10 times his or her Constitution Bonus. He or she does not lose consciousness at 0 Hit Points as normal but is automatically dead once the bonus Hit Points have been exceeded. Using this ability requires the character to make a Will Save at DC 15 (beyond the Saving Throw for actually going insane [see the Berserk Feat in Chapter 9]). Table 8-3 indicates the number of times per day this ability can be used. A Berserker who employs this Class Feature is Exhausted for twice the normal amount of time following coming out of the rage.

Glytha

The Glytha is the female priest in the Viking world. She doesn't worship the gods in quite the same way that the Godi (see below) does, though. She acknowledges that her power comes from the gods, for it is they who created the universe and have set forth the ideals to which humanity should aspire. However, she specializes in Sejdr — the projection of the self into

the spirit world. Only women possess this power, and it is highly regarded —and feared — by men.

Glytha are also revered for their prowess in battle. The image of the Norse battle maiden has some of its foundation in this class. A Glytha is accepted and even welcomed on the field of battle. Few of them have enough time to train to be expert combatants, but they make up for this in fury and with their magical powers.

Perhaps most importantly, the Glytha are the choosers of the slain. Captured enemies are taken to Glytha and they make their cases as brave warriors. Those that impress the Glytha are ritually slain by them. This is a high honor since it helps the warrior get to Valhalla. Those found wanting are condemned to slavery. Glytha choose to have sex with enemy warriors that they find especially worthy. These men are slain after climax, often with a kiss of death as the Glytha plunges her sacrificial dagger into his heart. Children born of these trysts are favored and thought to be blessed.

Glytha make excellent adventurers. Their good combination of combat skills, Divine Magic, and Sejdr gives them a wide variety of talents to bring to bear.

Requirements: Female

Hit Die: d8

Skill Points at 1st Level: (2 + Int Modifier) x 4

Skill Points at Each Additional Level: 2 + Intelligence Modifier

Class Skills: Animal Empathy, Concentration, Craft, Diplomacy, Handle Animal, Intimidate, Intuit Direction, Knowledge (Arcana), Knowledge (Religion), Knowledge (Sejdr), Scry, Spellcraft

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: Glytha are proficient with Simple and Martial Weapons. They are also trained in the use of Light and Medium Armor and Shields.

Class Features: A Glytha gains Class Features at a rate shown on Table 8-4. These are described below.

Table 8-4: Glytha Class Features

Level	*Attack*	*Fort*	*Ref*	*Will*	*Class Features*
1	+1	+0	+0	+2	Speak with Fylgia, Spirit Projection, Spell-casting
2	+2	+0	+0	+3	Chooser of the Slain
3	+3	+1	+1	+3	
4	+3	+1	+1	+4	Spirit Combat
5	+4	+1	+1	+4	Touch from Beyond 1
6	+5	+2	+2	+5	
7	+6/+1	+2	+2	+5	Ride with the Valkyries
8	+6/+1	+2	+2	+6	Plane Travel
9	+7/+2	+3	+3	+6	
10	+8/+3	+3	+3	+7	
11	+9/+4	+3	+3	+7	Touch from Beyond 2
12	+9/+4	+4	+4	+8	
13	+10/+5	+4	+4	+8	
14	+11/+6/+1	+4	+4	+9	Touch from Beyond 3
15	+12/+7+/+2	+5	+5	+9	
16	+12/+7+/+2	+5	+5	+10	
17	+13/+8/+3	+5	+5	+10	Spirit Kill
18	+14/+9/+4	+6	+6	+11	
19	+15/+10/+5	+6	+6	+11	
20	+15/+10/+5	+6	+6	+12	Touch from Beyond 4

Speak with Fylgia (Su): The character has the ability to speak with *fylgia*, the spirit animals that act as guides and protectors of the Lesser Races. The character can speak with her personal *fylgia* as well as those of others. She can automatically converse with her own *fylgia* at will. To speak with another spirit animal, the character makes an Intelligence check at DC 15. Once the character has established the ability to speak with the *fylgia* in question, she need not roll again.

Spirit Projection (Sp): This is the means by which a Glytha projects her soul into the spirit world. To do so, she makes a Will Save at DC 15. If it is unsuccessful, she cannot pass out of her body. If she does make it, though, her soul leaves her body and travels into the spirit world. Her body lies comatose in the world of the mundane. Often, a guard or series of guards is appointed to watch over her while she travels.

The Glytha cannot necessarily see the physical world while out of her body. Her mind perceives the spirit world as looking like an idealized version of Midgard (or whatever plane she is on). Thus, it is difficult to tell what is part of the spirit world and what is part of the real world. However, people on the physical plane occupy the space they do in the spirit world. Thus, a person who is at home on Midgard is also at home in the spirit world. The exception to this, of course, are those women who practice Sejdr and can leave their bodies.

What a Glytha looks like in the spirit world is partially chosen by her. She has the ability to determine her appearance, but it is driven by her subconscious. She usually appears as an idealized version of herself (though those with low self-esteem will frequently appear ugly). That is, she is radiantly beautiful and brimming with power. Many Glytha wear very little clothing (if any at all) in the spirit world because they wish for everyone to behold all that makes them special. Because it is an idealized version of the self, the Glytha's appearance does not have to have anything to do with reality. She can be as beautiful and endowed as she likes.

While in the spirit world, Glytha cannot talk to those in the world of the mundane. They can only talk to other creatures and people in the spirit world. To do so, the character must know the language of the creature or person to whom she wishes to speak. *Fylgia* are a different matter; Glytha can speak with them through their Speak with *Fylgia* ability. Glytha can send messages to another person by giving a message to the character's *fylgia*, which tells the character in a dream.

Glytha can be attacked by other creatures in the spirit world, and this is very dangerous for novice Sejdr-practitioners. While the character can interact with the spirit world, she cannot act upon it. Thus, a spirit-creature that attacks her has the ability to kill her without her being able to put up a fight. While the battle occurs entirely in the mind, it can have very real effects. Any damage the character takes is transferred to her physical body. Those observing her may actually see cuts open and bruises appear on her skin.

When this sort of thing happens, the Glytha must attempt to flee the spirit world. She does so by making a Will Save at DC 20. Ordinarily, she can simply end her travels and return to her body with only a thought. When she is under attack, though, she has to flee back to her body, and her assailant may well try to prevent that. Making the Will Save is a Move-Equivalent Action.

Although she cannot fight herself, a Glytha can summon her *fylgia* to protect her. Doing so requires a Will Save at DC 15. Her *fylgia* begins within 100 feet of her (roll d%). At the start of the round after it is summoned, it rolls an Initiative and begins moving at top speed in the direction of the Glytha. It attacks the character's assailant the round it arrives. However, if the Will Save is failed, the *fylgia* does not hear the summons and therefore doesn't come.

Despite being unable to physically defend herself, a Glytha can use magic in the spirit world. Any spells she casts will be effective against spirit-creatures. However, it does not do well to tarry when one is under attack and unable to physically defend oneself. A Glytha who is out of spells and who cannot make her Will Save is in very desperate straits.

Spell-casting (Sp): Glytha can cast Divine Magic

Table 8-5: Glytha Spell Progression

	Spells per Day									
Level	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1	2	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
2	2	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
3	3	2	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
4	3	2	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
5	3	3	2	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
6	3	3	2	2	-	-	-	-	-	-
7	4	3	3	2	1	-	-	-	-	-
8	4	3	3	2	2	-	-	-	-	-
9	4	4	3	3	2	1	-	-	-	-
10	4	4	3	3	2	2	-	-	-	-
11	4	4	4	3	3	2	1	-	-	-
12	4	4	4	3	3	2	2	-	-	-
13	4	4	4	4	3	3	2	1	-	-
14	4	4	4	4	3	3	2	2	-	-
15	4	4	4	4	4	3	3	2	1	-
16	4	4	4	4	4	3	3	2	2	-
17	4	4	4	4	4	4	3	3	2	1
18	4	4	4	4	4	4	3	3	2	2
19	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	3	3	2
20	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	3	3	3

as though they were Clerics from the standard game. They get their spells from the gods in the same way Godi do (see below). Table 8-5 lists a Glytha's spell progression.

Chooser of the Slain (Ex): Glytha choose which captured enemy warriors are worthy of ritual killing (thus helping the victim to reach Valhalla). For every four Class Levels a Glytha has, she adds +1 to the Charisma check of the slain character when checking for an heroic death (see Chapter 9). If she chooses to have sex with the victim before killing him, he may add an additional +1 bonus for every four Class Levels of the Glytha that kills him.

Spirit Combat (Su): The Glytha is now capable of defending herself in the spirit world. She can both attack other spirit-creatures and defend herself from them. The character begins with an Armor Class of 10 and adds her Wisdom Bonus to this number. For every three Class Levels she has, she may add an additional +1 to her AC. She attacks using her standard Base Attack Bonus but adds her Charisma Bonus to the attack roll instead of her Strength Bonus.

The Glytha carries no weapons with her into the spirit world, but she may imagine one (just as she creates her self image there). The type of weapon doesn't really matter. The Glytha simply creates one out of the ethereal stuff of the spirit world in any shape she likes. The weapon's damage is determined by the Glytha's Class Level as shown on Table 8-6. She adds her Charisma Bonus to the damage rating.

Attacking is a Standard Action just as if the character were engaging in combat in the mun-

Table 8-6: Glytha Spirit Combat Damage

Class Level	*Damage*
5-7	1d6
8-10	1d8
11-12	2d6
13-15	2d8
16-18	2d10
19-20	2d12

dane world. The Glytha gets a move before or after her attack as usual, and all other combat rules apply as though this were a standard combat.

Touch from Beyond (Sp): The Glytha has become powerful enough to affect the physical realm while she inhabits the spirit world. She can now cast spells from the spirit world against targets on any of the Nine Worlds.

However, casting a spell on a person will bring his or her *fylgia* instantly to the target's defense. The spirit animal will attack the Glytha and attempt to end the threat to its ward's life. *Fylgia* will show up as quickly as possible. The creature begins within 50 feet of the focus of the spell (roll 1d6-1 and multiply the result by 10; a result of "0" indicates the *fylgia* was at the epicenter of the spell). It then moves at top speed directly towards the caster starting with the next round (roll an Initiative for the *fylgia*). The Glytha may summon her own *fylgia* to defend her as usual, but the creature assigned to protect her target will do everything in its power to get to her, especially if harming her will somehow break the spell.

Touch from Beyond has four levels. Each allows the character to cast more and more powerful spells into the realm of the mundane. Table 8-7 details which spells are available.

Table 8-7: Touch from Beyond Levels

Touch from Beyond Level	*Spell Level*
1	0-2
2	3-5
3	6-7
4	8-9

Ride with the Valkyries (Su): Most characters have the opportunity to die an heroic death and so be escorted to Valhalla. There, they can continue to serve in the afterlife until Ragnarok. Glytha have a special opportunity, though. Those that have reached at least 7th Level can roll separately for an heroic death. The character first rolls normally to see if she died heroically enough to be noticed by a Valkyrie. If so, she rolls again. This is also a Charisma check and the DC is 20. For every Class Level she has above 7th, she may add +1 to the roll. If this check is also successful, the character is made a Valkyrie. Her race changes to Valkyrie, and she can begin adventuring as a Minor God. More information on heroic deaths is available in Chapter 9.

Plane Travel (Sp): The Glytha is now capable of traveling from one of the Nine Worlds to another. She passes through the spirit world, taking her body with her. This ability can only be performed once per day, and she cannot take anyone with her. Comrades must travel via a different means between worlds.

Spirit Kill (Sp): This devastating power enables a Glytha to kill a person from the spirit world. That is, she can attack a person in the world of the mundane while she is in the spirit world. Targets of this power have little ability to defend themselves since they cannot see or fight the Glytha.

To use the ability, the character makes a Will Save. The DC is the target's Character Level (or Hit Dice) + his or her Charisma Bonus. If the Saving Throw is successful, the Glytha inflicts 2d8 points of Constitution Damage to the victim. She adds her own Charisma Bonus as a damage modifier (for example, 2d8+2 points of Constitution Damage if the character had a Charisma of 14). The target is allowed a Fortitude Save for half damage. This damage will heal normally if the Glytha doesn't finish the job, but as soon as the character is reduced to a Constitution of 0 or less, he or she dies.

Like Touch from Beyond, the target's *fylgia* will move immediately to defend him or her. The *fylgia* starts within 50 feet of the target character just like Touch from Beyond and moves at top speed towards the Glytha intent on stopping her. If the Glytha summons her own *fylgia* to defend her, the spirit-creature defending the victim will ignore it if possible and focus solely on trying to kill the Glytha.

The range of this ability is 50 feet + 10 feet times the Glytha's Wisdom Bonus. Thus, a Glytha with a Wisdom of 18 would have a 90-foot range (50 + [10 x 4 = 40] = 90).

Godi

The Godi is the Norse priest. He is the link between the Lesser Races and the gods. This class is exclusively male. Females entering the priesthood become Glytha. Most men who become Godi do so because they are poor fighters or weak. They cannot earn honor on the battlefield, so they earn it through wisdom and knowledge. While a Godi doesn't have quite the social standing of a warrior, he is well-respected for his link to the gods. Older warriors will sometimes become Godi after they retire, and there is great honor in this pursuit since the man has proven himself on the field of battle and now seeks wisdom.

While a Godi is typically devoted to a particular god, he is an expert in the worship of all of them. Thus, he does not pray to a single god for his spells. He prays to the gods in general. Each of the gods grants certain powers, though and a Godi may call out to one of them to receive a particular benefit.

Godi are poor fighters, but they do make excellent adventurers. Their spells and knowledge of the gods are beneficial attributes held in esteem by any wise adventuring party.

Requirements: Male; Alf, Dwarf, or Human

Hit Die: d6

Skill Points at 1st Level: (2 + Int Modifier) x 4

Skill Points at Each Additional Level: 2 + Intelligence Modifier

Class Skills: Concentration, Craft, Diplomacy, Heal, Knowledge (History and Legends), Knowledge (Religion), Runecraft, Spellcraft

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: Godi are profi-

Table 8-8: Godi Class Features

Level	*Attack*	*Fort*	*Ref*	*Will*	*Class Features*
1	+0	+0	+0	+2	Plea; Spell-casting; Turn/Rebuke Undead
2	+1	+0	+0	+3	
3	+1	+1	+1	+3	Read Runes
4	+2	+1	+1	+4	
5	+2	+1	+1	+4	
6	+3	+2	+2	+5	
7	+3	+2	+2	+5	Bonus Feat
8	+4	+2	+2	+6	
9	+4	+3	+3	+6	
10	+5	+3	+3	+7	
11	+5	+3	+3	+7	
12	+6/+1	+4	+4	+8	Bonus Feat
13	+6/+1	+4	+4	+8	
14	+7/+2	+4	+4	+9	
15	+7/+2	+5	+5	+9	
16	+8/+3	+5	+5	+10	
17	+8/+3	+5	+5	+10	Bonus Feat
18	+9/+4	+6	+6	+11	
19	+9/+4	+6	+6	+11	
20	+10/+5	+6	+6	+12	

cient with Simple Weapons. They are also trained in Light and Medium Armor and in Shields.

Class Features: Godi gain Class Features at a rate shown on Table 8-8. Descriptions follow.

Plea (Sp): This is the means by which a Godi can draw on a god's granted power. The character may automatically use the granted power of his primary deity (that is, the one he principally worships) once per day. He may then offer a plea to any other god to use his or her granted power. To do so, the character makes a Charisma check at DC 12. If it is successful, the god has heard the character's plea and granted the power. If not, the deity does not listen.

Making a plea is a Partial Action. The character may use this ability once per day for every four Class Levels he has. This is in addition to the automatic use that he gets from his god every day. A character may substitute making a plea to his god's granted power again, but this use counts against the number of pleas he can make per day. Granted powers are given in each god's description in Chapter 13.

Spell-casting (Sp): Godi cast Divine Magic. They pray to the gods for their spells as though they were Clerics from the standard game. Table 8-9 details a Godi's spell progression.

Turn/Rebuke Undead (Sp): This ability works the same as the Cleric ability from the standard game. Note that *einheriar* and other characters that have been taken to Valhalla or Nifleheim after death count as Undead for turning purposes.

Read Runes (Ex): Godi are educated in the runes and can perform readings. They gain a +2 Class Bonus to all Runecraft checks to read runes. The mechanics for a runic reading are described in Chapter 10.

Table 8-9: Godi Spell Progression

	Spells per Day									
Level	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1	4	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
2	5	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
3	5	4	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
4	5	4	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
5	5	4	2	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
6	5	5	3	2	-	-	-	-	-	-
7	6	5	3	2	1	-	-	-	-	-
8	6	5	3	3	2	-	-	-	-	-
9	6	5	4	3	2	1	-	-	-	-
10	6	5	4	3	3	2	-	-	-	-
11	6	6	4	4	3	2	1	-	-	-
12	6	6	4	4	3	3	2	-	-	-
13	6	6	5	4	4	3	2	1	-	-
14	6	6	5	5	4	3	3	2	-	-
15	6	6	5	5	4	4	3	2	1	-
16	6	6	5	5	4	4	4	3	2	-
17	6	6	5	5	5	4	4	3	2	1
18	6	6	6	5	5	4	4	3	3	2
19	6	6	6	6	5	5	4	4	3	2
20	6	6	6	6	5	5	5	4	3	3

A Magician's Staff

Magicians' staves must be made from ash wood. This is the same wood as Yggdrasil, the World-Tree. It is therefore magical in its nature, suitable to accept magical runes and project their power through the Magician.

The staff must be expertly carved and may have no imperfections. One with too many knots in it will not do, but it can be a fairly twisted piece of wood. The price of a new staff is 15 gold. GM's may wish to increase the fee based on market fluctuations.

Magician

This class is designed to replace the Wizard and Sorcerer classes from the standard game and is, in many ways, a fusion of the two. Scandinavian mythology does not make reference to wizards memorizing spells from books. The vast majority of the people of the time were illiterate. However, most magic arose from specially crafted items. The magicians of the legends used artifacts and magical foci to work their spells.

Magicians gain their spells in similar fashion to Wizards and Sorcerers. As they progress in level, they are able to learn more and greater spells. They can cast more spells per day and do more with them.

Rather than memorizing spells and using material components, a Magician burns the runes necessary to cast a spell into his or her staff. This staff then serves as a magical focus for all of his or her spells. Without it, the character can only cast 0-Level spells. A lost staff must be replaced (that is, the character has to burn new runes into a fresh staff).

The magician may cast his or her spells like a Sorcerer. That is, he or she gets a certain number of spell slots per day. The character may cast any combination of spells that does not exceed his or her slots. Thus, a character that can cast four 1st Level spells can cast the same spell four times, four different spells, or any combination in between. The character does not have to memorize them beforehand since they are inscribed on his or her staff. Like Wizards and Sorcerers, though the Magician must rest sufficiently to replenish his or her spell slots. Casting magical spells takes great energy. Without at least six hours of uninterrupted rest, the Magician cannot renew his or her casting abilities.

Magicians can choose to specialize as if they were Wizards from the standard game. All of the rules for doing so are exactly the same. The Spell Mastery Feat from the standard game cannot be used, though, since the Magician is dependent upon his or her staff and not a spellbook for magic.

Requirements: None

Hit Die: d4

Skill Points at 1st Level: (4 + Int Modifier) x 4

Skill Points at Each Additional Level: 4 + Intelligence Modifier

Class Skills: Concentration, Craft, Decipher Script, Knowledge (Arcana), Perform, Scry, Spellcraft

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: Magicians are proficient with all Simple Weapons.

Class Features: A Magician gains Class Features at a rate shown on Table 8-10. He or she also gains spells every level. The rate for this is shown on Table 8-11. Unique Class Features are described below.

Spell-casting (Sp): The principle weapon of the Magician is his or her ability to cast magical spells. This is done the same as in the standard game, with the Magician casting Arcane Spells, except that the character's staff substitutes as a focus for any material components listed in the spell's description. A Magician may cast 0-Level spells without his or her staff. All other spells require the staff to work. The Magician must hold the staff and gesture as appropriate. Arcane Spell Failure as a result of wearing armor applies just like in the standard game.

Parting a Magician from his or her Staff

Because Magicians are reliant on their staves for power, opponents in combat will attempt to take them away. There are a number of ways to accomplish this. A foe could make a Disarm attack to take the staff away, but this is largely ineffective since a Magician can simply summon it back if he or she is of sufficient level.

Some unscrupulous types will hire a rogue to steal the staff. This is usually done the night before a great battle in which the Magician is expected to participate. Thus, the Magician and his or her allies are effectively disempowered right before the battle. However, this is a cowardly tactic unworthy of the gods. Generals engaging in such behavior do little to help themselves reach Valhalla.

The most reliable and heroic way is to destroy the staff in combat. This is a very dangerous tactic. First off, it has to be done in melee combat, forcing the would-be saboteur to get close to the Magician. Once it becomes plain what the attacker is up to, the Magician will no doubt stop at nothing to kill such a person.

Secondly, it involves trying to strike the staff hard enough to break it. This can be difficult to accomplish. Use the rules for striking a weapon from the standard game, except that the attack can be either Slashing or Bludgeoning. The staff has a Hardness of 5 as usual, and it has 10 + x Hit Points, where "x" is the highest spell level inscribed on it. Thus, a staff with a 5th Level spell as the highest level spell of which it is capable of casting has 15 Hit Points (10+5=15).

If the staff is reduced to 0 Hit Points or less, it shatters. That's when the real danger begins. A shattered staff releases the magical energy within it in explosive fashion. The staff deals out yd6 points of damage for every spell inscribed on it, where "y" is the level of the spell in question. Thus, a 3rd Level spells, dishes out 3d6 points of damage. A Magician with six 1st Level spells and two 2nd Level spells, then, would unleash 10d6 points of damage if his or her staff were shattered ([1d6 x 6] + [2d6 x 2] = 10d6).

The explosion affects everyone within five feet of the Magician. All affected individuals get a Reflex Save for half damage. Even so, destroying the staff of a powerful Magician is usually fatal. However, this is seen as a bold and glorious death. The one who makes the sacrifice helps his or her lord by taking out a powerful enemy. Even if the Magician attacked doesn't die in the explosion (which is rare), he or she can no longer cast deadly spells. It is therefore the kind of death every good Viking seeks: meaningful and heroic.

Like a Wizard, the Saving Throw for all spells cast is 10 + the spell's level + the Magician's Intelligence Bonus. Also like Wizards, the Magician must have an Intelligence of 10 + the spell's level to be able to cast it. At the beginning of play, a Magician knows all of the 0-Level Arcane Spells and three 1st Level spells of his or her choice. The character knows additional spells based on his or her Intelligence Bonus per the rules from the standard game. When the Magician goes up in level, he or she learns one new spell for each spell level to which he or she has access. However, the maximum number of a spells a Magician can learn per level increase is three.

Inscribe Rune (Sp): This is the process by which the Magician infuses his or her staff with power. Each time he or she learns a new spell, the character burns the specific magical runes necessary to invoke the spell into the staff. This is done via wood-burning, and it must be done

Table 8-10: Magician Class Features

Level	*Attack*	*Fort*	*Ref*	*Will*	*Class Features*
1	+0	+0	+0	+2	Spell-casting; Inscribe Runes
2	+1	+0	+0	+3	
3	+1	+1	+1	+3	
4	+2	+1	+1	+4	
5	+2	+1	+1	+4	Summon Staff
6	+3	+2	+2	+5	
7	+3	+2	+2	+5	
8	+4	+2	+2	+6	
9	+4	+3	+3	+6	
10	+5	+3	+3	+7	Bonus Metamagic Feat
11	+5	+3	+3	+7	
12	+6/+1	+4	+4	+8	
13	+6/+1	+4	+4	+8	
14	+7/+2	+4	+4	+9	
15	+7/+2	+5	+5	+9	Bonus Metamagic Feat
16	+8/+3	+5	+5	+10	
17	+8/+3	+5	+5	+10	
18	+9/+4	+6	+6	+11	
19	+9/+4	+6	+6	+11	
20	+10/+5	+6	+6	+12	Bonus Metamagic Feat

with precision. To make the inscription, the character makes a Reflex Save at a DC of 10 + the level of the spell. As long as it is successful, the runes are properly inscribed. If it is failed, the work is ruined and the spell cannot be cast from the staff as is. The Magician cannot learn that spell until the next level, when he or she can try to properly inscribe it again. The GM has the option to make this Saving Throw secretly so that the player will not know if he or she got it right until the character tries to use the spell.

Summon Staff (Sp): The Magician can call his or her staff to him or her from a distance. As a Standard Action, he or she simply reaches out, and the staff will fly to his or her hand from wherever it was, provided it can cross the intervening distance (for example, it could not make the trip if it was locked in a case). The range for this ability is 10 feet + 5 feet per Class Level. Thus, a 5th Level Magician can call his or her staff from a range of up to 35 feet (10 + [5 x 5 = 25] = 35). Note that the staff still has to travel the distance and this can take time. The staff moves at a rate of 50 feet per round. Thus, if it is beyond 50 feet, it will take more than one round to reach the Magician.

Bonus Metamagic Feat (Sp): Beginning at 10th Level, the Magician gets a bonus Feat every five levels. However, this Feat must be a Metamagic one.

Skald

The Skald is a Norse poet and replaces the Bard from the standard game in the VIKING AGE setting. He or she composes verse that is principally concerned with the gods and their exploits. The character is therefore intimately familiar with the legends and stories surrounding the Aesir and Vanir and their foes, the giants.

Most Skalds are in the employ or enjoy the patronage of a jarl. A talented Skald can add

Table 8-11: Magician Spell Progression

	Spells per Day									
Level	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1	4	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
2	4	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
3	4	4	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
4	4	4	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
5	4	4	2	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
6	4	4	3	2	-	-	-	-	-	-
7	4	4	3	2	1	-	-	-	-	-
8	4	4	3	3	2	-	-	-	-	-
9	4	4	4	3	2	1	-	-	-	-
10	4	4	4	3	3	2	-	-	-	-
11	4	4	4	4	3	2	1	-	-	-
12	4	4	4	4	3	3	2	-	-	-
13	4	4	4	4	4	3	2	1	-	-
14	4	4	4	4	4	3	3	2	-	-
15	4	4	4	4	4	4	3	2	1	-
16	4	4	4	4	4	4	3	3	2	-
17	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	3	2	1
18	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	3	3	2
19	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	3	2
20	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	3	3

prestige to any court, and grateful jarls will often present a Skald with a shield depicting a scene from Norse mythology. Many Skalds compose verse specifically written for the scene in question, thereby returning the honor.

Skald is a difficult profession because the verse is very specific and exacting. It is a demanding art form, and only the dedicated master it well.

A Skald is useful to a party of adventurers, though, because his or her education is broad, enabling him or her to find solutions to a wide variety of problems. They are inspirational individuals, who can raise their comrades to victory or terrify their opponents into defeat.

Requirements: None

Hit Die: d6

Skill Points at 1st Level: (6 + Int Modifier) x 4

Skill Points at Each Additional Level: 6 + Intelligence Modifier

Class Skills: Bluff, Craft, Decipher Script, Diplomacy, Gather Information, Innuendo, Intimidate, Knowledge (History and Legends), Knowledge (Religion), Perform, Read Lips, Sense Motive, Spot, Use Magic Device

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: Skalds are not especially well-known for their combat prowess, though many do train to fight in the service of their lords. They are proficient with all Simple Weapons, with Light Armor, and with Shields.

Class Features: A Skald gains Class Features as listed on Table 8-12. Explanations follow.

Literacy Feat (Ex): Because they must be able to read and write to compose verse, Skalds get this Feat for free.

Tales of Heroism (Sp): Skalds know many heroic tales and are able to draw parallels between them and current events. In this way, they can inspire their comrades to greatness. By telling one of these tales and pointing out to the listeners the similarities between their situation and the one from the story, the Skald can embolden the audience, allowing them to perform better. The character effectively casts Bull's Strength, Cat's Grace, or Endurance on the audience. The effect lasts for 1d4 hours + 1 hour/level and the maximum number of people that can be affected is 1 + the Skald's Charisma Bonus.

Each time the Skald earns this ability, he or she

Skaldic Poetry

Skaldic poetry is responsible for much of what we know about Norse mythology. The term, "skald," means "poet," and the verse that these individuals composed was largely dedicated to the legends of the gods.

It was not an easy form of poetry to master, though. The principle technique is the use of "kennings." A kenning is composed of a base word and a modifier. For example, one might use the base word, "tree," and the modifier, "of battle." Thus, the kenning would be "tree of battle." This is a metaphorical unit meant to describe a warrior. The warrior is referred to as a tree because he stands tall in battle. Hence, "tree of battle." This modifier might further be a kenning. For example, "battle" might be expressed as "din of spears" since combat is noisy and spears were one of the primary weapons of the age. Thus, you might have "tree of the din of spears."

Therefore, reading skaldic poetry can be difficult, and composing it was even more so. It is showy, clever poetry meant to be read by those with an appreciation for such things. Moreover, it often relies on reader knowledge. For example, gold is often referred to as "the headpiece of Sif." This image makes reference to the story of Loki having to hire a dwarf to make golden hair for Sif after he cut hers off. Thus, the audience has to be educated to understand some of the imagery.

There were two basic types of poems in the skaldic tradition: those with refrains and those without. The former are referred to as flokkr. The latter are known as drápur. The refrains of drápur separate the poems into sections.

must choose a different spell to cast. Thus, at 1st Level, he or she must choose whether the ability will emulate Bull's Strength, Cat's Grace, or Endurance. At 7th Level, he or she chooses from among the remaining two, and at 12th Level, the character can cast all three. Once a character has chosen a particular spell, he or she cannot change. Thus, if the character chooses Cat's Grace at 1st Level, he or she cannot choose to cast Bull's Strength until 7th Level.

Parable (Ex): The stories of the gods' adventures can be very instructive. By emulating the gods' actions from the tales, the character can gain an advantage of his or her own in the form of a +4 Insight Bonus to any die roll, including attack rolls, damage rolls, Saving Throws, and Skill checks. The Skald may use this ability once per day for every three Class Levels he or she has. It is transferable to another character so long as the Skald is in a position to tell his or her comrade what to do.

Detect Magic (Ex): A Skald's familiarity with legend and lore makes it easy for him or her to know when something is ensorcelled. The character may cast Detect Magic a number of times per day equal to his or her Wisdom Bonus.

Identify (Ex): The Skald's education is now sufficient enough to know exactly what an item is by studying it. This ability works exactly like the 0-Level Wizard spell, except that the character does not actually cast a spell and therefore needs no material components.

Magical Verse (Sp): This is a limited form of Item Creation Feat. It only works on an item that depicts a legendary scene. Thus, it must be used on a shield or an article of clothing. The Skald composes a few lines of poetry telling the story that is pictured. The item then confers an additional +1 bonus to AC and is considered a Magic Item. The object must be of Masterwork quality and the scene must be exquisitely rendered. To complete the enchantment, the Skald must make a Perform Skill check at DC 20. This

Table 8-12: Skald Class Features

Level	*Attack*	*Fort*	*Ref*	*Will*	*Class Features*
1	+1	+0	+2	+2	Literacy Feat, Tales of Heroism
2	+2	+0	+3	+3	Parable
3	+3	+1	+3	+3	Detect Magic
4	+3	+1	+4	+4	
5	+4	+1	+4	+4	Identify
6	+5	+2	+5	+5	Magical Verse
7	+6/+1	+2	+5	+5	Tales of Heroism
8	+6/+1	+2	+6	+6	
9	+7/+2	+3	+6	+6	Terror of Legend
10	+8/+3	+3	+7	+7	Courage of Words
11	+9/+4	+3	+7	+7	Commanding Voice
12	+9/+4	+4	+8	+8	Tales of Heroism
13	+10/+5	+4	+8	+8	
14	+11/+6/+1	+4	+9	+9	
15	+12/+7+/+2	+5	+9	+9	Legendary Verse
16	+12/+7/+2	+5	+10	+10	
17	+13/+8/+3	+5	+10	+10	
18	+14/+9/+4	+6	+11	+11	Curse
19	+15/+10/+5	+6	+11	+11	
20	+15/+10/+5	+6	+12	+12	

ability cannot be used more than once per item.

Terror of Legends (Su): Just as the Skald knows tales that can inspire his or her friends, he or she knows ones to petrify foes. By shouting out to an enemy (in a language he, she, or it can understand) that he, she, or it will suffer the same fate as described in an appropriate legendary tale, the Skald can invoke the effects of Fear in his or her opponents. This is a Standard Action, and the range for this ability is 50 feet. A Will Save (DC 11 + the Skald's Charisma Bonus) negates it. Creatures more powerful than 6 Hit Dice get a +1 bonus to the Saving Throw for every Hit Die above 6. Creatures that have more Hit Dice than the Skald are immune. The ability otherwise works exactly like Cause Fear with the duration being 1d4 rounds + the Charisma Bonus of the Skald.

Courage of Words (Sp): Sometimes even the greatest warriors fall under the curse of fear. Creatures with supernatural Fear abilities can make cowards out of the brave. The Skald can counteract that sinister ability. By reciting verse and telling tales of heroism, the character can effectively cast Remove Fear. This is a Standard Action (just as if the Skald were casting a spell) and the range is 50 feet. The number of people affected is equal to 1 + the Skald's Charisma Bonus. The ability is usable once per day per four Class Levels the Skald has.

Commanding Voice (Sp): Because he or she can speak with great authority, the character can issue sharp commands that must be obeyed. He or she has become so powerful that people will often do what the character asks without even thinking about it. The character issues a command in a language the listener understands that can be up to five words such as, "return home" or "stop attacking him" or "give me your weapon." The subject of the ability is allowed a Will Save at DC 10 + the Skald's Charisma Bonus + half the Skald's Class Level to resist. If the command is clearly one that will cause the target harm such as, "fall on your sword," the subject gets a +4 Circumstance Bonus to the Saving Throw. The range for this ability is 50 feet and the Skald can affect a number of people equal to 1 + his or her Charisma Bonus. This ability can be used once per day per five Class Levels the character has.

Legendary Verse (Sp): The Skald can now enchant any item with up to a +3 bonus regardless of whether it depicts a scene. The character composes a poem in which the item figures prominently, which must be based on a true event. As usual, the item must be of Masterwork quality. The Skald makes a Perform check to enchant the item with a bonus to attack/damage or to AC. The DC for this check is determined by the size of the bonus. +1 requires a DC of 25. +2 is DC 30, and +3 needs a DC of 35.

Curse (Sp): This is a terrible ability that only the most powerful Skalds possess. A character of this level understands the power of words and the strength of legends. He or she is able to curse another person or creature by writing a poem detailing it. There are few limitations on what the Skald can do. The victim could be transformed into a monster or afflicted with a chronic illness or made to be hideous or to sleep forever. It is up to the Skald to determine what happens and the GM to enact it. Game masters are allowed to set constraints.

However, there are two limitations that accompany every Curse. The first is that the victim cannot be cursed to die. The very point of a curse is to make the victim suffer beyond all comprehension. Death is a release, even if the character is condemned to work for Hel in Nifleheim. The sole exception to this is if the target is cursed to die over and over again.

The second and more important limitation is that there must be a means by which the curse may be broken, and this is inscribed in the poem. For example, in Avalanche Press's DOOM OF ODIN, a dwarf Artificer curses a human woman. He enchants her to fall asleep for all eternity. He places her in a tomb and surrounds her with traps. The only way to break the curse is to rescue the young woman from the tomb. All curses can be broken, but doing so is always difficult and requires some act of great courage or character (and usually both). The terms of how the curse can be broken should be devised by the Skald and approved by the GM.

A curse is a terrible (and usually evil) thing. It is sometimes used by the just to punish the wicked or teach them a lesson. More often, it used by villains to inflict pain. Regardless, a curse is never authored lightly. It is a rare thing and only used in extreme circumstances.

Spákona

A Spákona is another practitioner of Sejdr. However, she is not the disciplined, controlled priestess that a Glytha is. Spákona might best be described as women with "wild talent." Instead of training to practice Sejdr, the power simply manifests in her.

Spákona are much more powerful than Glytha. Their magic is raw and untrained. There is no focus or control. They are simply able to use the power in its unrefined form. However, many Spákona go mad as a result. They often have a difficult time distinguishing between the spirit world and the world of the mundane.

Spákona often receive powerful visions of the future as well. Given their difficulty distinguishing between different realities, this sort of thing only serves to drive them further into madness.

It is considered very unlucky to kill a Spákona. Thus many of them are left alone to suffer a life of insanity. They are consulted when it is important to know the future, and they can make good companions in an adventuring party since their Sejdr is very powerful. However, they often lead lonely lives, and even those with

Table 8-13: Spákona Class Features

Level	*Attack*	*Fort*	*Ref*	*Will*	*Class Features*
1	+0	+0	+0	+2	Disturbing Presence, Madness, Speak with Fylgia, Spell-casting, Spirit Travel
2	+1	+0	+0	+3	
3	+1	+1	+1	+3	Touch from Beyond
4	+2	+1	+1	+4	See
5	+2	+1	+1	+4	
6	+3	+2	+2	+5	Slip
7	+3	+2	+2	+5	Omen
8	+4	+2	+2	+6	
9	+4	+3	+3	+6	Spirit Theft
10	+5	+3	+3	+7	
11	+5	+3	+3	+7	Spirit Kill
12	+6/+1	+4	+4	+8	
13	+6/+1	+4	+4	+8	Spiritquake
14	+7/+2	+4	+4	+9	
15	+7/+2	+5	+5	+9	Absorb
16	+8/+3	+5	+5	+10	
17	+8/+3	+5	+5	+10	
18	+9/+4	+6	+6	+11	Tear the Veil
19	+9/+4	+6	+6	+10	
20	+10/+5	+6	+6	+12	

friends cannot make others truly understand what they perceive.

Players should think twice before choosing to play a Spákona, and GM's should exercise caution when allowing one into their campaigns as a PC. Role-playing an insane character can be a fun challenge, but it can also cause disruptions. Proceed with caution when using this class, and players should be aware that the character will slowly go more and more crazy.

Requirements: Female

Hit Die: d6

Skill Points at 1st Level: (2 + Int Modifier) x 4

Skill Points at Each Additional Level: 2 + Intelligence Modifier

Class Skills: Animal Empathy, Bluff, Hide, Innuendo, Intuit Direction, Sense Motive, Scry

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: Spákona are proficient with daggers, clubs, and spears.

Class Features: Spákona gain Class Features as shown on Table 8-13. Descriptions follow.

Disturbing Presence (Ex): Spákona are almost universally feared. They possess natural power that no other person does. Magicians, Glytha, Godi, and

Table 8-14: Insane Behaviors

Roll on the chart below according to whether the character suffers from mild, moderate, or severe madness. The character rolls on the chart that is equal the most severe behavior she has. If a character has three behaviors of one type, she automatically graduates to the next level.

Mild (roll 1d10)

Die Roll	*Behavior*
1	Character repeats everything she says.
2	Character rhymes everything she says.
3	Character is a kleptomaniac; whenever she goes to a new location, she steals some small item.
4	Character is a compulsive liar.
5	Character mumbles constantly.
6	Character is afraid of the dark (-2 all dice rolls at night; Incapacitated [though awake] in total darkness).
7	Character can't remember names (though she does know the people when she sees them or when they come up in conversation).
8	-1 Intelligence score*
9	-1 Wisdom score*
10	-1 Charisma score*

Moderate (roll 1d8)

Die Roll	*Behavior*
1	Character is an alcoholic; whenever she is stressed, she drinks until drunk. If she cannot drink, she becomes belligerent.
2	Character becomes obsessed with some quest. She pursues it given any opportunity, and will abandon her friends and current business if a lead comes up.
3	Character cannot sleep for days at a time. She must make a Fortitude Save at DC 30 to fall asleep. The DC falls by one every day. After one day, the character is Fatigued. After three days, she is Exhausted. Sleeping is the only thing that cures these conditions.
4	Character is numb. She cuts herself every day (1d4 points of damage) "just to feel something."
5	Character has an imaginary friend to whom she constantly talks. She becomes belligerent if a companion "threatens" or "harms" the friend in some way.
6	-2 Intelligence score*
7	-2 Wisdom score*
8	-2 Charisma score*

Vitki all deal in magic in one fashion or another, but they must train to do so. The Spákona's power comes naturally. She is also insane, driven mad by the magic that courses through her. Both facts combine to make others fear a Spákona. They are consulted when necessary, but no one likes to do so. Every creature that meets the Spákona feels unsettled. He or she

suffers a -2 Morale Penalty to all dice rolls. The range for this ability is 50 feet + the Spákona's Charisma Bonus times 10 feet. Thus, a Spákona with a Charisma of 17 would have Disturbing Presence in a circle centered on her that extends 80 feet (50 + [3 x 10 = 30] = 80) in every direction.

A Spákona can terrify a creature as though casting Cause Fear. She simply gazes at him or her and wills the target to be afraid. The target creature must meet the Spákona's eyes, making this a Gaze attack. Victims are allowed a Will Save at DC 10 + the Spákona's Class Level to resist. Range is the same as the passive version.

In rare instances where a Spákona is part of an adventuring party, her companions can become resistant to the effects of Disturbing Presence. To do so, they first spend five consecutive days with her. At that point, her friends can begin making Will Saves. The DC for these is 15 minus the Spákona's Charisma Bonus. Each time the character makes the Saving Throw, he or she can ignore Disturbing Presence for one day. When he or she has made three Saving Throws, he or she is temporarily immune. The character does not have to make another Saving Throw until the Spákona reaches the next level. When she does, her friends must make Will Saves again just as before. However, they do not have to spend five consecutive days with her. They can simply start making the rolls. The problem is that, as the Spákona grows in power, she becomes more unsettling to others. She can still use the active version of her power — causing Fear — on her friends, even if they have made the requisite Will Saves.

Madness (Ex): The problem with having such strong Sejdr powers is that they tend to drive the Spákona insane. As her power grows, so does her madness. The most merciful thing that can be done to such a person in these days before mental health care is often simply to kill her. However, this is rarely done because it is considered very unlucky to kill a Spákona.

The character begins the game with some form of mild insanity. Each time the character gains a level, she must roll to see if her madness increases. To do so, she makes a Will Save at DC 12 + her Class Level. If she succeeds, there is no harm. If she fails, her madness increases. This occurs by the character gaining another insane behavior. Table 8-14 lists behaviors that can be generated randomly.

In addition to rolling each time the character gains a level, she must also roll whenever she uses one of her more powerful abilities. The following Spákona Class Features cause the character to roll for insanity: See, Omen, Slip, Spiritquake, and Tear the Veil.

Madness comes in three varieties: mild, moderate, and severe. All Spákona begin with one mild insane behavior. A character who gains three insane behaviors graduates to moderately insane. He or she begins acquiring moderately insane behaviors instead. If the character gains three moderately insane behaviors, her madness degenerates to severe. She then begins gaining severe insane behaviors.

The more severe a behavior is, the more debilitating its expression. Insane behaviors occur virtually all the time. The Spákona cannot help but express them. She can, however, suppress them for a limited period of time. To do so, the character makes a Will Save at a DC determined by the severity of the behavior. Mild behaviors require a DC of 10; moderate ones can be suppressed with a DC of 20, and severe insanity forces the character to succeed at DC 30. The duration for the character's lucidity is one round + one round for every number by which she beat the Difficulty Class. Thus, if a character needed to roll a 10 and got a 13, she could shrug off the mild insanity for four rounds.

Note that a character with multiple behaviors still expresses any she didn't suppress. Thus, while a character might make the Saving Throw to be free of one behavior, she still is susceptible to all of the others from which she suffers.

A character with three severe behaviors is irrepressibly insane. At this point she becomes totally self-destructive. She does not know how to control her illness and only wants release. She begins to engage in activities designed to get her killed. She has no understanding of what kind of harm she can cause others. Thus, it is entirely conceivable for a mad Spákona to

Table 8-14: Insane Behaviors (cont.)

Severe (roll 1d8)

Die Roll	*Behavior*
1	Character develops 1d4+1 multiple personalities. Every morning, she rolls to see "who wakes up." Every hour and during times of great stress, roll again to see if there is a change.
2	Character hears voices. These voices whisper in her ear and tell her to do things that are almost always destructive. The Spákona may try to resist, but the voices continue to talk to her until she finally gives in, which she always does.
3	Character speaks constantly in a language no mortal can understand. Only the gods know this language, and it is related to the creation of the universe. The Spákona understands everyone else, but she must make a successful lucidity check to communicate with them.
4	Character is extremely paranoid. She believes everyone wants to harm her no matter what assurances she is given. She may go along for awhile, but she is always looking for an opportunity to protect herself and will betray the party at the best opportunity to do so (including attempting to kill them).
5	Character is a homicidal lunatic. She kills to satisfy urges that are difficult to understand. She simply thinks that by killing she will fix the problem. It is rare for an afflicted Spákona to kill her friends. She works very hard to otherwise appear normal. She prefers to kill people she does not know. That doesn't mean her party is safe, though.
6	-4 Intelligence score*
7	-4 Wisdom score*
8	-4 Charisma*

** These penalties to Ability scores are permanent reductions and represent the destruction of the character's mental faculties by madness. Characters whose scores fall below 3 become subhuman. A Spákona with an Intelligence score of 0-2 forgets how to talk. She becomes driven almost purely by instinct. One with a Wisdom of 0-2 is a blithering idiot. She babbles incessantly about anything. Whatever enters her mind comes out of her mouth. A character with 0-2 in Charisma becomes flat and expressionless. It is almost impossible to tell if she is paying attention or even awake. Such a character is nearly catatonic.*

plunge the universe into Ragnarok simply by using Tear the Veil (see below) in an ill-conceived attempt to destroy herself.

Madness is incurable. A Greater Restoration, Limited Wish, Miracle, or Wish spell will remove a single behavior, but the Spákona must still roll for insanity every time she gains a level. Moreover, while these spells are powerful, they can only remove one behavior at a time. A Spákona with multiple behaviors still expresses any that were not affected by the spell.

Speak with Fylgia (Sp): This ability works exactly like the Glytha power of the same name with one exception. *Fylgia* fear Spákona. Thus, they do not like to talk to them. In addition to the Intelligence check (DC 15) to actually speak with the spirit-creature, the character must also make an Animal Empathy check. The DC for this check is 15 if the Spákona is acting friendly or in a neutral fashion to the *fylgia*. If she is angry, upset, or otherwise agitated, it is DC 20. If she threatens the creature, the DC rises to 25. Any *fylgia* not charmed by the Animal Empathy check flees from the Spákona unless it

is attempting to protect its chosen person, in which case it will ignore anything the character says and simply attack her. *Fylgia* suffer from the effects of Disturbing Presence like any other creature.

Spell-casting (Sp): Spákona cast Divine Magic, but, rather than praying for their spells, they are able to simply draw upon the energy in the spirit world to cast them. Not even Glytha understand how they do this. A Spákona's spell progression is listed on Table 8-15.

Table 8-15: Spákona Spell Progression

	Spells per Day									
Level	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1	4	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
2	5	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
3	5	4	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
4	5	4	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
5	6	5	2	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
6	6	5	3	2	-	-	-	-	-	-
7	6	5	3	2	1	-	-	-	-	-
8	6	6	3	3	2	-	-	-	-	-
9	6	6	4	3	2	1	-	-	-	-
10	6	6	4	3	3	2	-	-	-	-
11	6	6	4	4	3	2	1	-	-	-
12	6	6	5	4	3	3	2	-	-	-
13	6	6	5	4	4	3	2	1	-	-
14	6	6	5	5	4	3	3	2	-	-
15	6	6	6	5	4	4	3	2	1	-
16	6	6	6	5	5	4	4	3	2	-
17	6	6	6	6	5	4	4	3	2	1
18	6	6	6	6	5	5	4	3	3	2
19	6	6	6	6	6	5	5	4	3	2
20	6	6	6	6	6	5	5	4	3	3

Spirit Travel (Su): This is the means by which a Spákona projects her soul into the spirit world. It works very much like the Glytha ability, Spirit Projection, but there are a few key differences. The first is that the DC to enter the spirit world is only 10.

Second, and much more importantly, a Spákona can interact fully with the spirit world. She can defend herself from attack, touch and attack others, and otherwise act as though she were in the mundane world. Like a Glytha, though, she cannot act on the physical world when she is in the spirit realm and vice versa. Table 8-16 details a Spákona's spirit damage in combat.

Table 8-16: Spákona Spirit Combat Damage

Class Level	*Damage*
1-3	1d6
4-6	1d8
7-9	1d10
10-12	1d12
13-15	1d20
16-18	2d12
19-20	2d20

Touch from Beyond (Sp): This ability works exactly like the Glytha one of the same name with one exception: Spákona have no restrictions on the level of spells that can be cast. They can cast any spell to which they have access from the spirit world into the physical one.

See (Su): This frightening ability is one of the powers that serves to drive Spákona mad. With

it, they can see into the spirit realm from the world of the mundane and vice versa. Without concentrating, it can be impossible to distinguish which is which. Focusing on either world requires the Spákona to make a Will Save at DC 12. If it is successful, she shuts out one of the worlds so that she can concentrate on the other. If not, she sees both.

It is very confusing to see both worlds at once because, while people generally occupy the same place in both realms, they look different. In the spirit world, the idealized version of them appears. This look can appear very different from the real-world equivalent. Thus, it is sometimes difficult for the Spákona to tell who is who and who is actually speaking or acting. Unless she is focusing on one world or the other, the Spákona suffers a -2 Circumstance Penalty to all dice rolls owing to confusion.

This double image can also be helpful, though. Because the idealized self is the one that appears in the spirit world, the Spákona can often get a glimpse of a person's plans, intentions, and personality. The character may make a Sense Motive check at DC 12 + the target's Wisdom Bonus to learn what he or she is really up to. The Spákona is able to glean one fact per check. She can either tap into his or her personality or see what his or her intentions are. This can be used as a +2 Bonus to AC if the Spákona is fighting the individual since she can more effectively anticipate his or her attacks.

This ability contributes to a Spákona's madness. Once per month, the character must make an insanity check on Table 8-14.

Slip (Sp): This is an extremely dangerous ability. With it, the Spákona can take her physical body into the spirit world. She transforms it into ether, and it goes with her, causing her to vanish from the world of the mundane. This can be extremely convenient for travel purposes. The Spákona can effectively go anywhere in the Nine Worlds in this way. While in the spirit world, she can take any actions of which she would normally be capable in either world.

However, there are also drawbacks with potentially lethal consequences. Spákona attacked when corporally manifested in the spirit world can be killed there. Their bodies do not return to the physical world when this happens. They simply rot in the spirit world. Thus, a Spákona can go off into the spirit world never to return.

She can get lost as well. Navigating the spirit world is always a difficult business, but getting lost is not a huge issue if one can return to one's body (automatically possible unless fleeing from trouble). If the body is with the traveler, though, there is no anchor to the physical world to draw it back. Once again, a Spákona can travel to the spirit world and never come back.

Perhaps the most dangerous side effect, though, is that the character may not always recognize that she has used Slip instead of Spirit Travel. Anytime the character enters the spirit world, she must make a Wisdom check at DC 10. Every Class Level that the character has beyond 6th adds one to the DC. So, if the character was 8th Level, the DC for the check would be 12. If she fails this roll, she uses Slip without realizing it, regardless of whether she wanted to use Slip or Spirit Travel. If she makes the roll, she uses whichever ability she likes.

Taking one's whole body into the spirit world contributes to losing one's grip on reality. Whenever this ability is used, the Spákona must make an insanity check on Table 8-14.

Omen (Sp): With this ability, the Spákona can see glimpses of the future. The spirit world is a strange place and there are often echoes of things to come hidden in it for those who know how to see them. Spákona can see the future, or what they believe will be the future, by looking at the pattern of movements in the spirit world.

The Spákona sees future events revealed in the spirit world. She understands what they mean perfectly. However, she is unfortunately unable to communicate that direct meaning to anyone else because she sees what the spirit world shows her, and no one else can see that. Thus, she can only describe what she has seen, which is often confusing to those from the mundane world. This also serves to drive the Spákona insane because it is often difficult to tell what is a vision of the future and what might be happening right then.

When this ability is used, the game master gives

the Spákona two to three events that she sees. He explains to the character's player what they mean, but the player is not allowed to reveal this information. He or she can only tell his or her comrades what the character saw (that is, the events the GM described). The Spákona makes a Will Save at DC 15 to see the omens. If it is failed, she does not see anything. The GM may give the character a vision anytime he or she likes as a plot device.

Understanding omens can lead to madness. Whenever the character uses this ability, she must make an insanity check on Table 8-14. She does not have to make the check if the GM gives her the vision as a plot device.

Spirit Theft (Sp): This terrifying ability scares the wits out of normal people. With it, the Spákona can take someone else's soul with her into the spirit world. She must be in the spirit world herself to perform this ability, summoning the character's soul to her. To perform this ability requires the Spákona to make a Will Save. The DC is the target's Character Level + 10. Victims may attempt a Will Save to resist, but the DC for doing so is 15 + the Spákona's Class Level.

Characters drawn into the spirit world act and react as though they were Glytha using the Spirit Projection ability. However, they must make a Will Save at DC 20 to return to their bodies. The body is comatose while the character is in the spirit world, and it can be attacked with the *coup de grace* rules. Taking damage in the physical world does not return a disembodied spirit to its body.

Spirit Kill (Sp): This ability works exactly the same as the Glytha ability of the same name.

Spiritquake (Sp): The character can now attack the very fabric of the spirit world if necessary. She sends out a wave of psychic energy that harms everything in its path. All living things (that are actually in the spirit world) in the path of the Spiritquake suffer xd6 points of damage, where x = half the Spákona's Class Level. The range of the attack is a radius of 100 feet + 10 feet per Class Level. The Spákona is at its epicenter and is unaffected. Affected creatures are allowed a Fortitude Save for half damage.

Using this ability can have an impact on the stability of the Nine Worlds. Whenever Spiritquake is used, the character must roll d%. The target number is equal to her Class Level x 5. If the number rolled is equal to or less than the target number, one Fate Point is subtracted from the campaign's total. The shockwave was great enough that the order the gods established is cracked. Rolling over the target number leaves everyone safe from further consequences. Fate Points are described in detail in Chapter 6.

Using this much power can be too much for the mind to take. A character must make an Insanity check on Table 8-14 when using Spiritquake.

Absorb (Sp): This ability works similar to Spirit Theft, except that now the Spákona can draw the entire individual, body and all, into the spirit world. The target acts as though he or she had used Slip, thereby being able to act with access to all of his or her abilities just as if he or she were in the physical world.

Getting back is a problem, though. With no anchor in the physical world, the character must find a gateway. Such apertures might drop the character just about anywhere, including on another world. The character's *fylgia* may consent to lead him or her to a way out, but, unless the character is a Glytha, he or she will not be able to speak to it. He or she will simply have to intuit what the spirit-creature wants him or her to do. The Spákona can return the character herself if she desires. Otherwise, the character is stuck in the spirit world until he or she finds his or her way out.

Tear the Veil (Sp): This devastating power sunders the boundaries between the spirit world and the physical one. The Spákona tears a hole in the fabric of reality to let the two realms intermingle. To do so, the character makes a Will Save at DC 30. If it is successful, everything goes to hell. Everything in either world can see and interact with everything in either world. This can be extremely confusing for anyone who is not accustomed to seeing into the spirit world (or the physical one). All creatures except for Spákona and Glytha suffer a -5 Circumstance Penalty to every die roll. All creatures move and act between the worlds as if

they were in their own. Things are truly mixed.

The duration for this disturbance is 30 minutes plus one minute per Class Level of the Spákona. When the rift closes, all creatures are trapped on whatever side they currently occupy. The range of the ability is a circle 100 feet + 10 per Class Level of the Spákona in diameter. The rent in the fabric of reality bisects this circle forming two perfect semicircles. One semicircle is the spirit world and the other the mundane one. Within the circle, everything is mixed together. Outside of it is the proper world on each side. Any creature within the circle when the tear closes automatically returns to their proper world. Anything outside the circle remains in the world it entered. Thus, traveling beyond the semicircle on the spirit side traps a character in the spirit world. Traveling beyond the circle on the physical side locks a creature into the world of the mundane when the aperture closes. A creature can go back to his, her, or its proper side by entering either side of the circle while it is open.

Use of this ability is devastating to the order of the universe. Whenever it is used, 1d6 Fate Points are subtracted from the campaign's total. The Spákona must also make an insanity check on Table 8-14 to avoid going further insane.

Vitki

Understanding of the runes is largely in the province of the gods. Odin won knowledge of

Table 8-17: Vitki Class Features

Level	*Attack*	*Fort*	*Ref*	*Will*	*Class Features*
1	+1	+0	+0	+2	Rune-casting, Runic Lore
2	+2	+0	+0	+3	
3	+3	+1	+1	+3	
4	+3	+1	+1	+4	Portents
5	+4	+1	+1	+4	
6	+5	+2	+2	+5	
7	+6/+1	+2	+2	+5	Signs
8	+6/+1	+2	+2	+6	
9	+7/+2	+3	+3	+6	
10	+8/+3	+3	+3	+7	Spell-casting
11	+9/+4	+3	+3	+7	
12	+9/+4	+4	+4	+8	
13	+10/+5	+4	+4	+8	Hindsight
14	+11/+6/+1	+4	+4	+9	
15	+12/+7/+2	+5	+5	+9	
16	+12/+7/+2	+5	+5	+10	Insight
17	+13/+8/+3	+5	+5	+10	
18	+14/+9/+4	+6	+6	+11	
19	+15/+10/+5	+6	+6	+11	
20	+15/+10/+5	+6	+6	+12	

them through the sacrifice of his eye, and he has shared this magic with his brethren among the Aesir and Vanir. However, there are a rare few members of the Lesser Races who have enough insight to make use of the runes. These few are known as Vitki, and they are among the most respected members of their individual communities.

A Vitki is one part priest and one part magician. He or she understands the power of the runes and casts them as though he or she were a god. The character also understands how to interpret them for visions of the future, glimpses of the past, and interpretation of the present.

Vitki frequently are in the employ of major jarls. Their wisdom and their ability to predict the future and interpret the will of the gods make them critical advisors. Because they are so rare, they are snapped up quickly.

They make good adventurers owing to their mix of fighting and magic. Vitki hold dear the ideals of the Aesir, since it was from Odin's wisdom and sacrifice that knowledge of the runes was won. Hence, they are trained to fight in addition to working the runes. They also, of course, have at their disposal the power of the runes, and they have insight that can be very useful to a party of adventurers.

Requirements: None

Hit Die: d8

Skill Points at 1st Level: (4 + Int Modifier) x 4

Skill Points at Each Additional Level: 4 + Intelligence Modifier

Class Skills: Concentration, Craft, Decipher Script, Diplomacy, Disable Magical Device, Gather Information, Heal, Knowledge (Arcana), Knowledge (History and Legends), Knowledge (Religion), Perform, Runecraft, Scry, Sense Motive, Spellcraft

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: Vitki are proficient with all Simple and Martial Weapons. They are also trained in the use of Light Armor and Shields.

Class Features: Vitki gain Class Features at a rate described on Table 8-17. These are detailed below.

Rune-casting (Sp): This is the Vitki's most basic ability. Unlike any other people among the Lesser Races, the Vitki understands runes and can cast them. Magicians and Artificers use runes and draw upon the magic that flows within them, but only a Vitki can actually cast them. These characters have a fundamental understanding of the universe and how to affect it.

A Vitki begins his or her career knowing two Runes plus a number of Runes equal to his or her Wisdom Bonus (to a maximum of five Runes at the beginning of play). The character gains new Runes as he or she advances in level.

Vitki Specialization

Like Magicians, Vitki can choose to specialize. They do so by choosing one of the three Aettir in which they will be expert. Aettir are described in detail in Chapter 10.

By specializing, the Vitki can cast one additional rune from his or her chosen Aett per day. Thus, a 1st Level Vitki who chose to specialize in the First Aett, could cast two runes from any Aett to which he or she had access and one additional rune from the First Aett. A Vitki must know the rune in question to cast it. The character gains a +2 Knowledge Bonus to Runecraft checks for all runes within his or her chosen Aett (including checks to learn new runes).

However, by choosing to specialize, the Vitki must choose another Aett from which he or she cannot learn any runes. Thus, our example Vitki from above would have to choose the Second or Third Aett as the one from which he or she could cast. If he or she chose the Third Aett, the character could not learn or cast any runes from the Third Aett. He or she could still learn and cast runes from the Second Aett. Which runes belong to which Aett is detailed in Chapter 10.

When the character gains certain Class Levels, he or she makes a Runecraft check at DC 20. If it is successful, the character may add the Rune in question to his or her repertoire. If not, the character must try a different Rune. A character may fail a maximum of three times per level. If he or she has not been able to add any Rune after three tries, he or she must wait until the next level to try to again.

The Runes are not easily grasped or wielded, though. Among the gods, only Odin knows them all, and even he is limited in how many he can cast per day. Table 8-18 lists the maximum number of Runes per level that a Vitki can know and how many he or she can cast per day.

Runic Lore (Ex): Vitki are well-studied in the runes and their meanings. They gain a +5 Class Bonus to all Runecraft checks to interpret a reading. The mechanics of a reading are detailed in Chapter 10.

Portents (Sp): At 4th Level, the character begins to gain insight into the universe. His or her understanding of the Runes enables him or her to get glimpses of the future. The character can use this ability in several ways.

The first is as a combat modifier. When in battle, the character can see ever so slightly into the future. By knowing what his or her opponent will do next, the character can anticipate and react accordingly. The character gains a +2 Circumstance Bonus against a single opponent. This bonus may be applied to attack rolls, damage rolls, or Armor Class, or it may be divided up among two of these options (for example, +1 to attack rolls and +1 to AC). The bonus may be reallocated every round, but it can only be used against a single opponent. Once the target has been chosen, the character cannot choose a new one, even if the current opponent is somehow dispatched. This ability lasts for a number of rounds equal to 5 + the character's Wisdom Bonus.

Secondly, the character may use this ability on a Skill check. By seeing a little forward into the future what the outcome of the task will be, the character may Take 20 on any Skill check, even ones where one cannot normally do so.

Finally, the character may get a minor vision. He or she sees something that will happen soon. This could be as simple as knowing what's on the other side of the door, or as esoteric as learning who the party will meet tomorrow. To use this function, the player declares his or her intent to the GM and a general idea of what he or she hopes to learn. The game master then makes up a vision for the character to interpret. For example, the character might see himself or herself battling an ogre on the other side of the door, or he or she might see a friend lying on the floor with a bashed-in skull or he or she might see a Magician casting a spell (but not at what or whom). All of these answers might indicate that there is an ogre on the other side of the door.

Portents has a limited number of uses per day,

Table 8-18: Vitki Rune Level Limits

The following table highlights how many Runes a Vitki can know per level as well as how many he or she can cast.

Level	*Runes Known*	*Casts per Day*
1	5	2
2	6	2
3	6	3
4	6	3
5	7	3
6	7	4
7	7	4
8	8	4
9	8	5
10	8	5
11	9	5
12	9	6
13	9	6
14	10	6
15	10	7
16	10	7
17	11	7
18	11	8
19	11	8
20	12	8

regardless of how it is used. The maximum number of times is equal to 1 + the character's Wisdom Bonus. When using it, the player declares which function the character employs.

Signs (Sp): The character's understanding of the Runes now allows him or her to better understand those who brought them to the Lesser Races: the gods. The character has become skilled at interpreting the "will of the gods" by drawing on the signs of recent events. By observing the universe around him or her, the Vitki draws conclusions on what the gods want from the Lesser Races at the moment.

This ability can be used in one of two ways. In the first, the player is able to ask the GM for advice. The question must be simple, and it must concern what is the best thing to do (more or less). The player cannot ask things like, "what are the powers of this Magic Item?" He or she can ask, though, "is the item we have been questing to find?" or "is this item evil or good?" Note that the player does not have to ask a yes/no question. He or she can ask an essay-type of question. It just must be somehow connected with what is the best thing to do. A question along the lines of "what will happen if we assault the trolls here?" is perfectly acceptable.

The game master is obligated to give a truthful answer, but it does not have to be a complete one. For instance, the GM could answer the troll question, "there will be bloodshed and mighty blows will be struck in Odin's name, but you will not have completed your quest." The answer implies that killing the trolls now will be helpful, but it will not accomplish the characters' aims fully. If they were tasked with destroying a band of trolls, they might infer that these trolls are not the only ones with which they must deal.

Remember too that this is about interpreting the will of the gods. In general, the gods wish to prevent Ragnarok, defeat their enemies, and fight gloriously and bravely. They have no qualms about sending a mortal to his or her death, so long as that death is not vain or empty. Upholding the gods' ideals is tantamount to doing what they wish.

Secondly, the ability can be used to determine a course of action on a more esoteric level. If a village is experiencing famine, it may mean many things. A Vitki can attempt to divine the purpose of this disaster. It may mean that the gods are angry and require some form of appeasement. It may mean that a band of monsters has taken up residence nearby, and their evil is causing the land to suffer. Or it may mean that it is time for the village to go out and raid a neighbor who is doing better. The character makes a Wisdom check at DC 20 under these circumstances. If it is successful, the GM tells the player what the signs mean. If it fails, the GM tells the player that they mean something else. Game masters may wish to make this roll in secret so that the player will not know if his or her character was wrong.

Signs is usable a number of times per week equal to 1 + the character's Wisdom Bonus. Either use is a Full Action.

Spell-casting (Sp): After having spent so much time studying the Runes, the character begins to see how magic can be drawn from them. He or she is not nearly as proficient at magic as a Magician, but the character is able to duplicate some of the Magician's abilities. He or she can cast Arcane spells. The DC for the Saving Throw to resist them is 10 + the level of the spell + the caster's Wisdom Bonus. Table 8-19 illustrates how many spells a Vitki can employ per day. Upon reaching 10th Level, the character learns eight 0-Level spells and three 1st Level spells of his or her choosing. For each level the character advances afterwards, he or she learns one new 0-Level spell and one spell for each level to which he or she has access. A maximum of three spells may be learned per level in addition to the 0-Level one.

Hindsight (Sp): The Vitki can now see into the past. He or she can see dramatic events from days gone by that are somehow connected to the present. This can be extremely helpful when looking for clues or motives. For instance, knowing that the Frost Giant, Hrothgar, has been seeking for many years a means to defeat Odin all by himself might tell a character that he is the Jotun responsible for the current troubles.

To use this ability, the character makes a Will Save at a DC set by the GM depending on the

obscurity of the information. Something that is well known has a DC of only 10. Less well known subjects require a DC of 15. Obscure knowledge has a DC of 20, and really obscure ones have a DC of 25. The game master determines how obscure this knowledge is.

Table 8-19: Vitki Spell Progression

	Spells per Day				
Level	0	1	2	3	4
9	3	1	-	-	-
10	3	2	-	-	-
11	4	2	-	-	-
12	4	3	1	-	-
13	4	3	2	-	-
14	4	3	2	-	-
15	4	4	3	1	-
16	4	4	3	2	-
17	4	4	3	2	-
18	4	4	4	3	1
19	4	4	4	3	2
20	4	4	4	3	2

If the Saving Throw is successful, the character receives a vision wherein an event related to what he or she wants to know is replayed. For example, the character from the example above might see Hrothgar paying a dwarf to fashion a magical ring that would enable him to defeat Odin.

This ability can also be used in a postcognitive fashion. The Vitki can "read" an object or a location to see how it was last used or what happened there. If the character were trying to discover who murdered the jarl's wife, for instance, he or she might attempt to read the murder weapon or the site of the crime so as to see what happened.

This is handled in the same fashion as the character looking for a more general vision, except that the DC for the Will Save is always 20. If it is successful, the character sees a replay of what happened within the timeframe he or she wants. The Vitki does not necessarily see who was involved (for example, the character's perspective might only be from the back, making it impossible for him or her to see faces), but he or she will see what happened and be able to generally describe who and what the character saw. Like Signs, this ability can be used a number of times per week equal to 1 + the character's Wisdom Bonus.

Insight (Sp): The Vitki's precognitive powers have grown to such an extent that he or she can really see the future now. Instead of getting hints from the immediate future, the character can receive full-blown visions of things that may come to pass.

To use this ability, the player asks the GM for a vision, specifying about what the character wants to know. The Vitki makes a Will Save at DC 20. If it is successful, the GM gives the character a vision. This vision takes the form of a surreal sequence of events. The character may know the people in it, or he or she may not. Typically, the events of the dream are not an exact sequence of what is to come. They are usually metaphorical in nature, forcing the character to figure out what the vision means.

For example, the character might see a dwarf hopping in a circle while a svartalf lifts a mighty sword in triumph. Odin weeps while a tribe of humans suffer.

Once can infer from these images that the vision portends trouble (and the Norse were a very pessimistic people, at least when it came to their mythology) since Odin weeps and humans suffer. However, it doesn't really say why. One presumes that the svartalf is somehow responsible since he is seen raising the sword, but what has the dwarf got to do with it? Moreover, when does this event occur? These are all things that the character must figure out. The unraveling of these mysteries offers insights into the future and ideas for plans of action.

Insight can be used a number of times per month equal to 1 + the character's Wisdom Bonus. Alternatively, the GM can simply give the character a vision without his or her player asking for one. These instances do not count against the character's maximum number of uses per month.

Chapter 9
New Rules for Viking Characters

This chapter contains a variety of new rules for your VIKING AGE campaign. New Feats and Skills, a revised equipment list, and other setting-specific mechanics are included within.

New Skills

In addition to the Skills from the standard game, characters may choose from the ones below.

Disable Magical Device (Int; Trained Only; Artificer, Vitki Only)

This Skill is similar to Disable Device from the standard game. However, it is only applicable to Magic Items. It is mostly used to disarm a magical trap. The user attempts to prevent the spell or rune placed to protect an object or portal from being set off, just as a Rogue would attempt to disarm a conventional trap. The DC for this Skill check is 15 + the caster level of the person who created the trap. If it is successful, the spell or rune is disarmed. If not, it goes off as designed.

This Skill is also used on occasion to undo a curse on an item placed by a dwarf. However, doing so is considerably harder. The base DC is set by the intensity of the curse. A minor curse is DC 20. Moderate curses are DC 25. Major curses are DC 30, and debilitating curses are DC 35. The level of the dwarf who laid the curse on the item is added to the final Difficulty Class.

The nice thing about curses is that they can all be undone (short of paying the dwarf what he was owed). If this Skill check is successful, the character learns how the curse may be broken. However this takes research time according to level of the curse laid. Minor curses require a week. Moderate ones need a month. A major curse must be researched for six months, and a debilitating one requires a year of study. The Skill check cannot be made until the end of that period, and the Artificer or Vitki cannot Take 20 on the die roll. He or she must also spend the full time doing nothing but studying. He or she may travel looking for lore on the subject (and this can be the source of great adventures), but the character cannot simply study in his or her spare time while fitting in a busy life of adventuring. Still, an inventive GM can design an entire campaign around the quest to undo a curse.

Finally, this Skill can sometimes be used to disarm a Magic Item in some fundamental way. The user strips the item of one of its magical powers by effectively disenchanting it. This is often a magical trap in and of itself since it is usually done when the owner is unaware. To perform this kind of treachery requires first a successful Runecraft Skill check at DC 10 + the caster level of the individual who enchanted the item. Then the character must make a Disarm Magical Device Skill check at a DC of 20 + the caster level of the person who enchanted the object. If it is successful, one property of the Magic Item can be taken away. Thus, a Bag of Holding would cease to become anything more than ordinary sack, or a +2 sword would become a +1 sword. The process must be completed for each ability the character wants to strip. Thus, to make that +2 sword an ordinary weapon, the character must complete two Disarm Magical Device checks. This ability is difficult to use, though, because it requires access to the item and four hours to work per attempt.

Disable Magic Device is a Class Skill for Artificers and Vitki. No other class may learn it.

Knowledge (History and Legends) (Int)

The character knows the general history and major legends of an area. Any legend concerning the gods and their exploits is covered under this Skill. Legends and the history of a particular region must be specified, however. Thus, to know the history and legends of Norway, the character must specify that when taking this Skill. Knowledge (History and Legends) may be taken several times, specifying a different region each time.

Knowing any particular fact requires a Skill check. Common information requires a DC 10 check. Uncommon but available knowledge is DC 20. Obscure information is DC 25, and extremely obscure knowledge is DC 30. Knowledge (History and Legends) is a Class Skill for Godi, Vitki, and Skalds, as well as Aristocrats. It is a Cross-Class Skill for all other classes.

Runecraft (Int; Trained Only)

This Skill works exactly like Spellcraft from the standard game. The difference is that it focuses solely on the 24 Runes of the Futhark. Characters may use it to get information on what rune a person is casting or the specialized effects that an inscribed rune may have. Runecraft is a Class Skill for Artificers, Godi, and Vitki. It is a Cross-Class Skill for all others.

New Feats

The following Feats are available to characters in addition to those listed in the standard game.

Behead [General]

The legend of Skarphedin Njalson, who "snow-boarded" on a shield downhill, beheading opponents as he went, demonstrates that the Vikings thought highly of killing an opponent with a single stroke. This feat allows a character to cut off a foe's head with one slice in combat

Prerequisites: Power Attack, Weapon Focus with a Slashing Weapon, Base Attack Bonus of +4

Benefit: Characters with this Feat are extremely dangerous opponents in a fight because they are skilled at decapitating their foes with a single stroke of their weapons. Whenever the character rolls a potential Critical Hit, he or she rolls again as usual to determine if the strike is indeed critical. If so, roll a third time. If the third result would also have resulted in a hit, the target of the strike is beheaded and dies instantly. This Feat is only usable with a weapon that does Slashing Damage, and it only works on creatures the same size or smaller than the character. Larger opponents and those that are immune to Critical Hits cannot be beheaded nor can creatures without a head.

Berserk [General]

One of the great legends of the Viking Age and of Norse Mythology is the berserk warrior. This person goes insane prior to the start of battle and becomes an absolute killing machine once combat begins. Sometimes this leads to victory while other times the warrior falls valiantly. Regardless, this legend is one of the enduring impressions of Scandinavian culture in the Ninth and 10th Centuries.

Prerequisite: 12+ Constitution

Benefit: When going berserk, a character gains a +4 Circumstance Bonus to Strength and Constitution. He or she gains any extra Hit Points as appropriate for Constitution change. However, the character also suffers a -2 Circumstance Penalty to his or her Armor Class since he or she is heedless of danger and simply fights with reckless abandon.

Going berserk is not an easy thing to do. The character must make a Will Save at DC 15. This requires three rounds to accomplish as the character storms around, bites his or her shield, attacks a tree, or anything else to work himself or herself up into an absolute frenzy. It is possible to do this during combat, but the DC rises

Table 9-1: Restricted Feats

The following Feats are not allowed in a VIKING AGE campaign.

General
Armor Proficiency (Heavy)
Deflect Arrows
Far Shot
Point Blank Shot
Precise Shot
Rapid Shot
Shot on the Run

Item Creation*
Scribe Scroll

Metamagic
Still Spell

Special
Spell Mastery

** Note that the level prerequisites for all Item Creation Feats may be ignored by Artificers.*

to 20. Most berserk rages are instigated just before combat as the warrior prepares for battle.

Once the character has gone berserk, he or she must attack something every round. If an enemy is not in immediate sight, the berserk warrior will attack the closest character. The berserk character can prevent this by making a Will Save at DC 15 to attack an inanimate object instead.

The rage lasts as long as the character likes. Thus, it can go on throughout an entire combat. However, stopping it can be troublesome. A berserk character must make a Will Save at DC 20 to return to normal. If it is failed, the rage continues and the character must attack something this round. Each subsequent round, the DC is reduced by one until the character at last can simply stop fighting.

Once the character makes a successful Saving Throw, he or she immediately loses all benefits of Berserk. His or her Strength, Constitution, and Armor Class return to normal, and the character loses the additional Hit Points that the Constitution gain provided. This may cause the character to die or begin dying depending on how much damage he or she took in the battle. For example, a character who had gained 12 Hit Points as a result of going Berserk who ended the combat with only 1 Hit Point would die instantly after leaving the berserk state since he or she would lose those 12 Hit Points, taking his or her total to -11.

A formerly berserk character is Exhausted upon successfully leaving the enraged state of mind. Because it is so physically demanding, a character may only go berserk a number of times per day equal to half his or her Constitution Bonus.

Charge [General]

Vikings were cunning warriors who knew how to deal with a shield-wall. They would search for a weak spot and then rush it. Lead warriors would jump onto the shield of opponents, knocking them down and then rolling out of the way. The person behind would then use an axe or sword to kill the prone foe before he or she could recover. Some warriors became extremely efficient at this action, and this Feat is for them.

Prerequisite: Base Attack Bonus +3

Benefit: A character using this Feat makes a Melee Touch Attack against an opponent with a shield. The character rushes headlong at the target, jumps up and kicks at the shield. Doing so does not provoke the usual Attack of Opportunity. If the attack succeeds, the defender must make a Reflex Save at DC 15 to avoid being knocked to the ground. The attacker's Strength Bonus acts as a negative modifier to the Saving Throw. If the Save fails, the target falls to the ground and is considered Prone. If it succeeds, he or she remains on his or her feet but is moved back five feet from his or her original position. The attacker is Prone regardless of the attack's success.

Normal: A character without this Feat must try to knock a target down using the normal Trip rules, and charging to do so provokes the usual Attack of Opportunity.

Glytha-Born [General]

Individuals born of the tryst between a Glytha and a man she ritually killed are thought to be extremely blessed. Characters with this Feat were conceived under such circumstances.

Prerequisite: Charisma 12+

Benefit: The character is immune to the effects of Fear. He or she is never afraid, and spells and special abilities that create Fear do not work on him or her. Additionally, the character gets one extra Glory point per adventure.

High Tolerance [General]

Characters with this Feat have a high tolerance to alcohol and do not easily get drunk.

Benefit: The character gets a +2 Bonus to all Fortitude Saves to resist the effects of alcohol. This includes Saves against becoming drunk, against becoming sick, against passing out, and against alcohol poisoning. Additionally, the penalties imposed on the character while drunk are halved. For more information on being drunk, see page 101.

Hurl Axe [General]

For the most part, missile weapons are seen as "unmanly." However, those that can be thrown and used in melee combat are deemed accept-

able. Some warriors learn to throw larger weapons such as battleaxes. This Feat makes such tactics possible.

Prerequisites: Strength 14+, Proficient with battleaxe or greataxe, Weapon Focus Feat (Battleaxe or Greataxe)

Benefit: The character may use a battleaxe or greataxe as a thrown weapon. The axe in question has a Range Increment of 5 feet. Damage is the weapon's damage rating + the character's Strength Bonus.

Normal: Without this Feat, the character may not use a battleaxe or greataxe as a thrown weapon.

Hurl Shield [General]

Viking warriors spent a lot of time practicing with their weapons, and this included shields. Some learned to use their shields as a second weapon, and others even learned to perform stunts with them in combat. The most common trick was to throw the shield like a disk, skipping it off the ground so that it would strike an opponent in the ankles or shins, tripping him or her. Those who became skilled at this tactic could fell an opponent and then stab him or her before the target could recover.

Prerequisites: Dexterity 14+, Base Attack Bonus +5, Shield Proficiency, Shield-fighting

Benefit: The character can make a Ranged Touch Attack with his or her shield. He or she throws it, disk-like, and attempts to skip it off the ground. If the attack succeeds, the shield deals 1d6 + the character's Strength Bonus points of damage and the target must make a Reflex Save at DC 12 + the throwing character's Strength Bonus to avoid being knocked down. If the Save fails, the victim falls to the ground and is considered Prone. This stunt may only be performed with a round shield, and, of course, once it is used, the attacker is without a shield.

Improved Spear-Throwing [General]

The spear was one of the most common weapons of the Viking Age and skill in its use was highly desirable. Some warriors became very proficient in throwing, and these individuals were prized on the battlefield.

Prerequisites: Dexterity 12+, Proficient with Shortspear, Weapon Focus (Shortspear) Feat.

Benefit: The character may throw two shortspears per round so long as his or her off-hand is free. This takes the form a second attack made with a -2 penalty. The character can only take this second attack if he or she is throwing two spears.

Normal: Without this Feat, the character must use another attack at the standard penalty or suffer the penalties described in the rules for fighting with two weapons in the standard game.

Literacy [General]

Like most societies of the time, the Vikings were largely illiterate. Very few learned to read or write, and those that did — particularly skalds — were respected greatly.

Benefit: The character can read and write his or her native language in addition to speaking it. This Feat can be taken multiple times. Each time, the character must specify a new language. Note that he or she must also take the Speak Language Skill if he or she wishes to speak it too. Likewise, a character can take Speak Language to know a foreign tongue without being able to read it if this Feat is not also taken.

Normal: All characters are presumed to be illiterate unless they take this Feat. Thus, reading is a rare skill.

Shield-Fighting [General]

Vikings didn't use their shields only for defense. They also knew how to use them offensively.

Prerequisites: Dexterity 12+, Shield Proficiency

Benefit: The character make an extra attack at a -2 penalty with his or her off-hand if he or she is wielding a small, wooden shield. The shield deals 1d4 points of Bludgeoning Damage if it hits. The usual penalties for fighting with two weapons do not apply.

Normal: A character without this Feat cannot use a shield as a weapon.

Summon Blade [General]

Prerequisites: Divine Race, Weapon Focus Feat, Base Attack Bonus +7, Masterwork Weapon

Benefits: By means of this Feat, a god can call his or her weapon, and it will answer. As a Standard Action, the deity commands the

weapon to spring forth, and it instantly teleports to his or her hand so long as it is within 50 feet. The weapon in question must be the same one that was chosen for the god's Weapon Focus Feat. This Feat is only available to Aesir, Vanir, and Valkyries in the VIKING AGE setting. The Lesser Races cannot take it.

Weapon-Catching [General]

In the Viking Age, the principle type of shield was the small wooden one. Some warriors developed the ability to use these to greater advantage than others. An iron or steel blade can become embedded in the wood. Warriors with special training could deliberately catch the blade in their edge of their shields and then disarm the opponent.

Prerequisites: Dexterity 12+, Shield Proficiency

Benefit: Once per round, a character with this Feat may attempt to disarm his or her opponent. To do so, he or she must be wielding a wooden shield and must be able to make a Move-Equivalent Action. If the character's

Table 9-2: Restricted Equipment

Adventuring Gear
Block and Tackle
Lantern (Any)
Oil
Spyglass

Class Tools and Skill Kits
Alchemist's Lab
Hourglass
Magnifying Glass
Smokesticks
Spell Component Pouch
Sunrod
Tanglefoot Bag
Water Clock

Clothing
Courtier's Outfit
Monk's Outfit

Mounts and Related Gear
Barding (Any)
Donkey
Heavy Warhorse
Mule
Riding Dog
Saddle (Military)
Wagon

Simple Weapons - Ranged
Crossbow (Any)

Exotic Weapons - Ranged
Crossbow (Any)
Shuriken

Armor
Armor Spikes
Banded Mail
Full Plate
Half Plate
Locked Gauntlet
Shield (Tower)
Splint Mail

Martial Weapons - Melee
Glaive
Guisarme
Halberd
Lance (Heavy)
Rapier
Ranseur
Scimitar

Martial Weapons - Ranged
Composite (Any)
Longbow

Exotic Weapons - Melee
Dire Flail
Gnome Hooked Hammer
Kama (Any)
Kukri
Nunchaka

Orc Double Axe
Siangham (Any)
Two-Bladed Sword
Urgrosh

attacker misses with a slashing weapon, the character may make a Reflex Saving Throw. If it is successful, the weapon has embedded itself in the edge of the shield. By throwing the shield away, the character can disarm his or her attacker. Regardless of whether the attacker is disarmed, he or she is off balance and suffers a -1 Penalty to Attack rolls and AC, and a -4 penalty to Initiative in the round following a successful use of Weapon-Catching.

The DC for the Reflex Save is 10 + the opponent's Dexterity Modifier. Weapon-Catching does not provoke an Attack of Opportunity. If the attempt fails, the attacker cannot attempt to Disarm the character.

Restricted Equipment

Not all of the equipment listed in the standard game is available in VIKING AGE. Some of it is technology unknown to the Norse people, and some of it is just plain gear with no basis in reality. Table 9-2 lists equipment that is not allowed.

Prayer

Prayer in the Viking Age was a little different than it is now. One does not pray to the gods asking for things as though writing a letter to Santa Claus. Such behavior is blasphemous and vulgar. Moreover, it is not in keeping with the desires of the gods. The Aesir and Vanir expect heroism and honor. Someone who comes to them begging for material goods or love or any other self-serving thing is insolent at best.

A character who prays in this manner will be punished. Treat him or her as though the Divine Spell, Bestow Curse, has been cast on him or her. The only way to undo the effects of this curse is for the character to atone with an act of selfless heroism. The GM decides what qualifies, but it is not something that can be done easily. Standards are high for repentance.

Prayer to the gods is acceptable, though. A devotee may entreat the gods for strength or wisdom or courage or even victory. Getting the gods to listen is not easy, though. They are busy with concerns of their own, and they respect those better who can stand on their own Still, they will listen to a devout worshipper.

To entreat the gods, the character rolls a d20 and adds his or her Charisma Bonus. The DC for this check is 20. Table 9-3 offers additional modifiers to the die roll.

If the prayer is heard, the god in question will grant the character a +2 Prayer Bonus as appropriate for 24 hours. Thus, if the character prays for strength, he or she will get a +2 boost to his or her Strength score for one day. If he or she prayed for courage, a +2 bonus to Will Saves would be appropriate. A character

Table 9-3: Prayer Modifiers

The following modifiers may be applied when a character prays:

Circumstance	*Modifier*
Praying at temple	+1
If priest is present	+1
Character has slain an enemy in the last 24 hours	+2
Character has acted courageously in last week	+1
Character has honored the gods in some fashion recently	+1
Character has prayed for help in the last week	-1
Character is Evil	-2
Character is non-Good (Neutral)	-1
Character has acted falsely in last week	-1
Character has acted cowardly in last month	-3

who prays for victory in battle might get a +2 bonus to attack rolls. The exact reward is up to the GM, but should be in line with the blessing for which the character asked.

Alcohol

Vikings enjoy drinking only a little less than fighting. They engage in the activity liberally, especially after a good battle. In particular, mead is believed to give wisdom to its drinkers. Thus, imbibing is an important activity.

Alcohol has a detrimental effect on the character, though. It both lowers his or her inhibitions, which often leads to antisocial behavior, and it impairs the character's ability to act effectively. When a character begins drinking, he or she takes the chance of getting drunk.

Getting Drunk

A character can have two drinks for free. That is, the first two alcoholic beverages consumed have no effect on him or her. For every drink after the second, he or she must make a Fortitude Saving Throw to avoid becoming drunk. The DC for this check is 10. However, the DC increases by two for each additional drink. So long as the Save is successful, the character remains sober. If the character is drinking wine or mead instead of ale, the base DC is 15.

If it is failed, the character becomes inebriated. He or she suffers 2 points of Temporary Ability Damage to all six Abilities. Additionally, any time the character is confronted or hears or sees something he or she doesn't like, a Will Save must be made to avoid "escalating" the situation. This doesn't mean a fight will break out right away. It only means a conflict will go to the next level. An insult becomes a bigger insult. A bigger insult becomes an argument. An argument becomes a fight. The GM determines what the next logical level is when the Will Save is failed.

Drunk characters continue to make Fortitude Saves each time they have another drink. Each time they fail, they suffer another 2 points of Ability Damage. A character's Ability Scores cannot drop below 1 in this fashion.

The Body's Way of Saying, "That's Enough."

A character that has failed five Fortitude Saves against becoming drunk must begin making an additional Fortitude Saving Throw to keep it down. The DC for this check is once again 10 + 2 for every drink the character has taken. This Save is made every time a Saving Throw to resist becoming drunker must be made, and, so long as it is successful, there are no additional ill effects. If it is ever failed, the character's body has had enough. He or she gets sick and begins expelling the contents of his or her stomach one round later. The character is now Nauseated. 10 minutes later, he or she Passes Out (see below).

Passing Out

A drunk character who has failed three Fortitude Saves against becoming drunk, must begin making an additional Fortitude Saving Throw to avoid Passing Out. The DC for this Save is 10 + 2 for every drink the character has taken. It is made with each additional drink, and, so long as it is made, there are no additional effects. If it is failed, the character loses consciousness and sleeps for 1d6+4 hours.

Alcohol Poisoning

A character who has three or more of his or her Abilities reduced to 1 by alcohol risks suffering from alcohol poisoning. He or she must make a Fortitude Save at DC 15. If it is failed the character takes 1d10 points of damage every hour. This continues until the character wakes up the following day. Thus, it is possible for alcohol-poisoned characters to die in their sleep. The Fortitude Save to resist poisoning is made for every drink the character consumes after three Ability scores reach 1. If five of the character's scores reach 1, he or she automatically suffers the effects of alcohol poisoning.

Recovering from Being Drunk

A character recovers 2 points to each Ability Score every hour after he or she stops drinking. When all of the character's scores have returned to their normal levels, he or she is sober. If the character goes to sleep or passes out, he or she awakes fully recovered. Characters suffering from alcohol poisoning recover at half this rate and are not automatically healed when they awake (though they do cease taking damage).

Table 9-4: Modifiers for the Flux

Circumstance	*Modifier*
Water drawn from river, stream, or lake in rural area	-5
Water drawn from well in urban area	-10
Farm or draft animals share water supply	-10
Water Drawn from river in an urban area	-20
Water mixed with alcohol	+15

All modifiers are cumulative.

Hangovers

When a character wakes up after having been drunk, it is possible that he or she will be hung over. The character makes a Fortitude Save, the DC of which is 10 + the number of drinks the character had the night before (twice that number if the drink was wine or mead). If successful, he or she gets off without a hangover. If not, he or she has a blinding headache and a queasy stomach that inflicts a -2 Circumstance Penalty to all actions, AC, and Saving Throws for 1d4+1 hours.

Disease

In the absence of modern medicine, disease is a very real danger that can kill a person with little warning. Several in particular were the enemy of the Vikings, and they are detailed below.

Arthritis

When Norse people hit middle age, they tend to suffer from arthritis as a result of their big bones. All characters who become middle-aged (see Chapter 7) must make a Fortitude Save at DC 20. If it fails, the character contracts arthritis and takes 1d4 points of Permanent Strength Damage. When the character hits old age, roll again with the DC rising to 25. Characters who already have arthritis suffer a -2 Circumstance Penalty on the Save. A failure causes another 1d4 points of Strength Damage, which is also permanent. Any character who lives to be venerable Saves at DC 30 when reaching the age bracket. Those with arthritis already suffer a -5 Circumstance Penalty. Failure has the same result as at other ages. Characters who are reduced to 0 Strength in this fashion die from the disease.

Dysentery (The Flux)

"Natural spring water" is not as good to drink as modern water bottlers would have you believe. The truth is, water is frequently impure, a fact that can be exacerbated by poor sanitation. The Norse are a generally cleanly people, but they do not understand microbial infestations of water supplies.

They do know, though, that drinking "pure" water is not always a good idea, and mix it with alcohol wherever possible. Whenever a character drinks water, he or she must make a Fortitude Save to avoid infection. The DC for this Saving Throw is 10, but it is modified by circumstances listed on Table 9-4.

A character who fails the Save is afflicted. He or she takes 1d6 points of Constitution Damage and is Exhausted for 24 hours. He or she suffers painful abdominal cramping and (often bloody) diarrhea. The true danger of the Flux is dehydration. It can be fatal if the character loses too many fluids. Each day, the character makes another Fortitude Saving Throw at the same DC as the one he or she had to make to avoid catching the disease. If it fails, the character takes another 1d6 points of Constitution Damage and remains Exhausted. If it succeeds, the character improves to

Fatigued and begins recovering normally. Fatigue lasts for 1d3 days but does not exceed the number of Constitution points lost.

Cholera

Cholera is similar to the Flux, but it is far worse and often fatal. It is usually transferred by water or milk that is contaminated with the bacillus. Cholera flourishes in unsanitary conditions, typically large gatherings of people where cleanliness is difficult to maintain.

In every urban area the characters encounter, roll a check to see if the water or milk supply is infected with *Vibrio cholerae*, the causal agent. Roll d%. If the result is 15 or less, the water or milk is tainted. In extremely unsanitary conditions, raise the chance to 25%.

Characters drinking tainted water or milk must make a Fortitude Save at DC 20. Mixing alcohol with the water reduces the DC to 10. Failure indicates that the character has contracted the disease.

Cholera incubates in the system for four to five days. Then it begins its attack. At first the character will have a headache and diarrhea. Treat him or her as Fatigued. Roll 1d3. This is the number of days these symptoms persist.

At the end of this stage, things worsen quickly. The character's body begins desperately to purge itself of pathogens. He or she suffers from frequent diarrhea and regular, painful vomiting. Stomach cramps and other related issues also develop. The character takes 1d8 points of Constitution Damage and 1d4 points of Wisdom Damage (the latter due to the onset of depression). He or she is also Exhausted from this point forward. Roll 2d6 when this stage begins. This is the number of hours this kind of suffering occurs.

At the end of the purging stage, the character collapses. He or she is Incapacitated. The character must make a Fortitude Save at DC 20 immediately. If it is successful, he or she manages to fight off the infection and begins recovery. If it fails, the character takes another 1d6 points of Constitution Damage. Assuming this doesn't kill him or her, roll 1d4. The result is the number of hours later the character must make another Fortitude Save. If it succeeds, recovery begins. If it fails, the character takes 1d6 points of Constitution Damage. This cycle continues until the character fights off the infection or dies.

Death occurs as a result of trauma and dehydration. A character who is fed a regular regimen of fluids gains a +2 Circumstance Bonus to the Saving Throws to recover. A Remove Disease spell will cure it upon application. The latter is about the only guaranteed method, though. Cholera is a malignant and deadly disease, and it is frequently fatal.

Trichinosis (Whale Sickness)

This disease is contracted from eating raw pork and whale meat. It can also be transferred by eating cooked meat that isn't cooked properly or not heated enough. Essentially, it's an infestation of worms in the body that is caused when the larvae are passed from tainted meat into the person's stomach.

Whenever the character eats pork or whale meat, he or she must make a Fortitude Save at DC 12. The DC rises to 20 if the meat is raw. Failure indicates infection. Four hours after ingestion, the character suffers from nausea, diarrhea, and abdominal pain. He or she takes 1d6 points of Constitution Damage and is Nauseated for one day. One week later, the character suffers 1d6 points of Strength Damage as the larvae work their way through his or her muscles. The character makes another Fortitude Save at DC 15 three days later. If it is successful, he or she recovers. If not, the character takes another 1d4 points of Strength Damage. Recovery is automatic afterwards (though damage must still be healed normally). Characters reduced to 0 Constitution or 0 Strength die.

Typhoid Fever

Like Cholera and Dysentery, this disease is usually transmitted through infected water and milk. It can also be transferred through food. It's caused by *Salmonella typhi* bacilli. The usual cause of tainting is improper sanitation of meat and drink, something the people of the Ninth Century only understand a little.

All food, water, and milk has a 5% chance of being infected. Water mixed with alcohol is safe as is any water, milk, or food that is gathered "in the wild." Only urban foodstuffs need be checked for purposes of the game.

Lice are another common carrier of the disease, and they plague Vikings (and all other people of this time). Once per month, the character should check to see if he or she has become infected from a louse.

A character makes a Fortitude Save at DC 15 to resist infection after ingesting tainted food or drink and must also make one every month to prevent infection from lice. The disease incubates for 1d3 weeks before it goes on the attack. At first, the character suffers from a headache, muscle pain and weakness, and an occasional nosebleed. During this early stage, the character takes 1d2 points of Strength Damage from which he or she does not recover until after the disease is beaten.

Within 1d4 days, the illness becomes severe. The character comes down with a very high fever and becomes covered in rosy spots. He or she may also develop a furry tongue (Fort Save DC 15 to prevent). Once this stage begins, the character takes 1d4 points of Strength Damage, 1d6 points of Constitution Damage, and 1d6 points of Wisdom Damage. During this time, the character becomes delirious. He or she must make a Will Save at DC 15 to be lucid. During this time, the character is Exhausted.

The disease runs its course in 2d6+6 days. During each day of the illness, the character makes a Fortitude Save at DC 15. If it is successful, nothing happens. The character simply suffers. If the Saving Throw is a failure, the condition worsens. The character takes an additional 1d3 points of Constitution Damage and one point of Permanent Intelligence Damage (a result of the fever damaging the character's brain). The disease lasts until the character dies or until the allotted time has run out, whichever comes first. If the character doesn't die, he or she can begin normal recovery at the end of disease's duration.

Typhoid fever is extremely infectious. Once a character begins displaying fever symptoms, his or her comrades must also make a Saving Throw to avoid contracting the disease. This Saving Throw must be repeated every four days that a person has contact with the sick character. Typhoid epidemics can devastate a city or town.

Death

In the 21st Century, we tend to see death as a bad thing to be avoided at all costs. The Norse people, though, did not share this belief. What they feared was not death itself, but dying badly. The gods demand selfless heroism. Those that demonstrate it may be taken to Valhalla by the Valkyries, where they will serve at Odin's side when Ragnarok comes. There is little greater honor.

One does not get to Valhalla by being a coward or by dying a silly, stupid death without any great tales of heroism to go with it. Only by living according to the decrees of the gods and fighting bravely does one stand a chance. Living an average life earns a person nothing in the afterlife, and living a cowardly one opens the opportunity for the individual to become a servant of Hel, fighting against the gods when the End Days arrive.

With all this mind, your character should not be afraid to die. Sacrificing oneself for the good of others is a classic Viking ideal. Charging headlong into combat against impossible odds is expected if there is something good to be achieved by doing so. Vain sacrifices are poor, but one wherein a character willingly fights off a horde of enemies so that his or her companions can escape is worthy of a saga.

When your character dies, how it happens has a bearing on what becomes of him or her. The character makes a Charisma check at DC 25 to determine if he or she suffers an "heroic death." An heroic death is one wherein the character fought bravely, sacrificed himself or herself, or was simply overcome in the proper execution of his or her duties. If the character died ignominiously, he or she has to check for a "cowardly death" (see below).

If the check is successful, a Valkyrie has noticed the character's deeds and comes to take him or her to Valhalla. A number of factors can modify this Ability check. These are listed on Table 9-5.

Table 9-5: Heroic Death Modifiers

This table helps determine if the character's death was heroic enough to merit induction into Valhalla. When making the Charisma check, apply as many of the following modifiers as appropriate.

Circumstance	*Modifier*
Character was 5th-10th Level	+1
Character was 11th-15th Level	+2
Character was 16th-17th Level	+3
Character was 18th-19th Level	+4
Character was 20th+ Level	+5
Character was ritually killed by a Glytha	+1/4 Glytha Class Levels
Glytha had sex with character before ritual killing	+1/4 Glytha Class Levels
Character died saving companions	+5
Character was of Good Alignment	+3
Character was of Lawful Alignment	+5
Challenge Rating was one to two levels higher than character*	+2
Challenge Rating was three to four levels higher*	+4
Challenge Rating was five or more levels higher*	-3
Challenge Rating was one to two levels lower than character*	-2
Challenge Rating was three to four levels lower*	-4
Challenge Rating was five or more levels lower*	-8
Character did not die in battle	-5
Character died stupidly (victim of an accident)	-5
Character was of Chaotic Alignment	-5
Character was of Evil Alignment	-3

** Calculate the Challenge Rating at the character's level. Because Challenge Ratings are based on a party of four adventurers using one quarter of its resources, it is reasonable to assume that one character using 100% of his or her resources (his or her Hit Points) had an even challenge in which he or she fell "heroically."*

If the character dies ignominiously, though, he or she has to avoid being judged a coward. Ignominious deaths are those wherein the character did not appear to uphold the will of the gods. He or she may have been fleeing, may have been acting evilly, or simply chosen not to take what might otherwise have been deemed an heroic action. To judge if a death might be cowardly, remember that the gods expect honor and courage, particularly in battle. If the character died committing an action that seems contrary to these ideals (that is, in direct violation of them), have him or her check for a cowardly death on Table 9-6. The character makes a Charisma check as if this were an heroic death, but the DC is only 20. There are no positive modifiers on the chart, though, so this is not necessarily an easier roll to make.

A character who succeeds in dying heroically, is taken to Valhalla. There he or she can continue to adventure in the name of the gods. Those that prove their mettle can be sent on minor missions to other of the Nine Worlds when necessary to win fame and glory in Odin's name. A character who gains five more Character Levels in the gods' service in this fashion is promoted to *einheriar*, the elite guard who fight at Odin's side during the Ragnarok. This is a high honor indeed, conferring bonuses detailed in the sidebar on page 107. The pow-

Table 9-6: Cowardly Death Modifiers

Circumstance	*Modifier*
Character was of Chaotic Alignment	-5
Character was of Evil Alignment	-3
Character was of Good Alignment	-5
Character was of Lawful Alignment	-8
Character was fleeing when killed	-5
Character refused to help a companion	-5
Character was acting as a bully	-3
Character was an incessant whiner	-3
Character constantly complained about things not done his or her way	-3
Character had an ill disposition	-2
Challenge Rating was one to two levels lower than character*	-2
Challenge Rating was three to four levels lower*	-4
Challenge Rating was five or more levels lower*	-8
Character did not die in battle	-5
Character died stupidly (was the victim of an accident)	-5
Character was 5th through 10th Level	-2
Character was 11th through 15th Level	-4
Character was 16th through 17th Level	-6
Character was 18th through 19th Level	-8
Character was 20th+ Level	-10

** Calculate the Challenge Rating at the character's level. Because Challenge Ratings are based on a party of four adventurers using one quarter of its resources, it is reasonable to assume that one character using 100% of his or her resources (his or her Hit Points) had an even challenge in which he or she fell "heroically."*

All modifiers are cumulative.

ers that the character has, though, are not half as important as the respect accorded someone with this designation.

Characters who are *einheriar* may still adventure, but they cannot allow such activities to interfere with their duties to Odin. A rare few are accorded an even greater honor. They are allowed to eat the Golden Apple of Idun, granting them immortality. Up until this point, a character can still be killed, and, if this happens, he or she is permanently dead and cannot participate in Ragnarok. Those who become immortal, though, become gods themselves. The character loses the benefits of being *einheriar* and instead chooses either the Aesir, Vanir, or (if female and the character desires) Valkyrie. Such an honor is only conferred when the character demonstrates exceptional deeds. He or she must consistently reflect the highest ideals of the gods and succeed under trying circumstances. GM's should only make this award when a character truly deserves it. The player can then use this character as the Minor God of his or her Divine Portfolio (see Chapter 6).

Characters who suffer cowardly deaths become servants of Hel. They are transformed into monsters to serve the Goddess of Death and will fight against the gods during Ragnarok. Such characters become NPC's under the control of the GM. Cruel GM's may decide to use such characters as foes of the party.

Einheriar

Upon being accorded the status of *einheriar*, the character gains the following abilities:

- +2 to Will Saves
- Wisdom of the Gods
- True Strike 1/Day

Wisdom of the Gods (Su): Once per day, when in doubt about what to do, the character can call upon the gods' insight to choose a path. The player may ask the GM what the best course of action is, and he or she must answer truthfully. However, this answer has more to do with what the gods want than what may be the wisest course of action. Players and GM's should keep this in mind.

True Strike (Sp): Once per day, the character may cast the Arcane Spell, True Strike, as a Free Action. Range is 20 feet.

The most significant aspect of Viking death, though, is its impact on the Fate Points of the campaign. If a character dies well, he or she can stave off Ragnarok a little longer by demonstrating that the ideals of the gods are alive and well. If he or she dies badly, the character can hasten the onset of the Doom of the Gods by demonstrating that the will of the gods is weak. Like determining whether a death is heroic or cowardly, how powerful the character is has an impact on how positively (or negatively) the chart is affected. Table 9-7 lists the Fate Points bonuses and penalties for individual deaths.

Cowardly deaths do not always negatively impact the fate chart, though. Dispatching an enemy of the gods is always a good thing. Thus, a character who dies a cowardly death who was of Evil Alignment, or who was Chaotic but not Good Alignment causes no loss of Fate Points. It is good that such a person dies, regardless of how it happens. Thus, ignore the usual penalties associated with a cowardly death for such a character in terms of the impact on the Fate Points of the campaign.

Ritual Killing

Captured warriors are brought before Glytha for judgment. Such warriors can expect one of two fates: death or enslavement. The former is the more desirable of the two — not because Vikings are excessively cruel to slaves but because being selected for ritual killing indicates the warrior is extremely brave and worthy of going to Valhalla.

Each man who is captured is brought before the Glytha. He then explains his deeds and his courage to her. In essence, he is attempting to explain to her that he is worthy of being killed and sent to Valhalla. The character in question makes a Diplomacy check. The DC for this is 20. The roll is modified using the same conditions as Table 9-5, except, of course, that the character hasn't been killed yet, so some of the

Table 9-7: Impact of Death on Fate Points

Heroic Death

Character Level	*Fate Points*
1st - 4th	+0
5th - 10th	+1
11th - 15th	+2
16th - 17th	+3
18th - 19th	+4
20th+	+5

Cowardly Death*

Character Level	*Fate Points*
1st - 4th	-
5th - 10th	-2
11th - 15th	-4
16th - 17th	-6
18th - 19th	-8
20th+	-10

** Note that these penalties do not apply if the character was Evil or a Chaotic non-Good Alignment.*

modifiers may not apply. Characters who have slain mighty beasts, conquered numerous foes, or otherwise had famous adventures receive a +1 bonus to the roll for each such instance they can name. Those who have reputations as cowards or failures suffer a -1 penalty for each such incident but only if the Glytha knows of it.

If the Skill check succeeds, the Glytha deems the character worthy, administers the kiss of death and kills him by plunging a sacrificial dagger into his heart. If it fails, she condemns him instead to slavery.

A character who scores a 30 or better on his Diplomacy check has so impressed the Glytha that she will have sex with him before killing him. The Glytha believes that the character is so brave and valorous that he should be both rewarded one last time and have his spirit preserved. Children who come from such a tryst are thought to be especially blessed and automatically receive the Glytha-born Feat (see page XX). Essentially, the Glytha wishes to ensure that such a line is continued if at all possible.

Captured females (those who fought in the battle, that is) are also brought before the Glytha for judgment. A successful check will see them honorably sacrificed as well. Glytha will administer the kiss of death to a worthy woman but do not choose to have sex with their female prisoners. There is, after all, no way to preserve the line. A captured Glytha who is judged receives a bonus to the Diplomacy check. For every four Class Levels the captive has, she gains a +1 bonus to the Diplomacy check. Her judge will look more favorably on her, desiring, if possible, to give her an opportunity to become a Valkyrie.

Chapter 10
Runes

The 24 Runes of the Futhark are an important part of the legends of the gods and of Norse culture. The runes have a number of meanings attached to them. They are letters, symbols, secrets, and fortunes. Each has an associated benefit and bane. Interpretation of readings can vary from reader to reader depending on the circumstances of the present, the subject of the reading, and the perspective of the reader. Additionally, the gods and certain mortals can cast runes for magical effects, unlocking their secrets and using their power to affect the universe.

Knowledge of the Runes

Odin won knowledge of the runes and their secrets by drinking from Mimir's Well. The vision was extremely potent, and it required him to sacrifice one of his eyes as payment. Among all the gods, only Odin knows all of the runes for casting purposes (see below), and he is the only person in creation who truly understands their secrets.

Mortals know of the runes and may even know what each means in terms of cosmic secrets. However, none of them truly comprehends their relevance to the universe or how they work. Vitki can achieve full understanding of some of them. Many people can learn to use them for prophetic purposes, but only Odin truly sees everything the runes have to offer.

Organization

The Runes are organized into three Aettir (singular, Aett). Each Aett contains eight of the 24 runes. The First Aett is also known as Freya's Aett. The second is often called Heimdal's Aett, and the third is sometimes known as Tyr's Aett.

Vitki characters can choose to specialize in one Aett by foregoing knowledge of another. Specific benefits can be found in the Vitki class description in Chapter 8.

The Runes and their Meanings

Each of the runes is listed below and includes a description. Included is the rune's symbol, its rough translation into English, the modern letters to which it corresponds, its Aett, its positive and negative meanings, and the gods or creatures with which it is usually associated.

Table 10-1: The Three Aettir

The First Aett (Freya's Aett)
1 Feoh
2 Ur
3 Thorn
4 Os
5 Rad
6 Ken
7 Gyfu
8 Wyn

The Second Aett (Heimdal's Aett)
1 Hegal
2 Nyd
3 Is
4 Ger
5 Eoh
6 Peord
7 Eolh
8 Sigil

The Third Aett (Tyr's Aett)
1 Tiw
2 Beorc
3 Eh
4 Man
5 Lagu
6 Ing
7 Daeg
8 Ethel

Beorc

Letter: B

Translation: Birch

Associated Gods: Frigga, Nerthus, and Hel

Aett: Third

Definition: Beorc is the mystery of the Earth Mother (Nerthus) and the all-encompassing cycle of life. It presides over the four stages of human life: birth, childhood, marriage (that is, adulthood), and death. It is also a sign of shelter.

Positive Meaning: The most obvious effect of a positive reading is protection. The subject will be sheltered. There are, though, some more esoteric interpretations. It can mean that new beginnings will be found in old patterns. The subject must be on the lookout for such developments so that they can best be exploited. Similarly, it can signal the introduction of new ideas in erotic relationships.

Negative Meaning: There are a number of horrible consequences from this interpretation. Sterility and stagnation are two; deceit is a third. Generally speaking, negative Beorc indicates family problems.

Daeg

Letter: D

Translation: Day

Associated God: Odin

Aett: Third

Definition: The light of day, helping one to awaken to new possibilities and lighting the path of the subject. Daeg is a very fortuitous rune in a reading.

Positive Meaning: A sign of great hope, Daeg offers the promise of a new vision, a new day, or grand insight. Things will change soon and for the better.

Negative Meaning: A negative reading of Daeg is very rare. When it does occur, it almost always indicates all of the positive aspects of the rune coming to someone who does not want them. Less often, it can mean hopelessness.

Eh

Letter: E

Translation: Horse

Associated God: Frey

Aett: Third

Definition: Relationships between differing individuals is the emphasis of Eh. Specifically, it focuses on the relationship between human being and horse — how two very different creatures can work together harmoniously. Perhaps not coincidentally, Eh is the symbol of a good marriage.

Positive Meaning: Harmony between two different forces. The power of Eh also facilitates travel between the Nine Worlds and is a favorite of Vikti with aspirations to travel beyond Midgard.

Negative Meaning: Loss of partnerships, particularly profitable ones. Worse, this rune can also mean betrayal.

Eoh

Letter: Ei

Translation: Yew Tree

Associated Gods: Odin, Uller

Aett: Second

Definition: Eoh is the principle of a vertical axis that intersects the world above and the world below, tying them to Earth. There is some imagery of Yggdrasil, the world tree, embedded here, though Yggdrasil is an ash tree. Yew is flexible but also hard. It endures beyond all things and is evergreen during the winter (thereby symbolizing life in the midst of death the way the holly does for the Celts). It also burns very well and is symbolic of "the fire within."

Positive Meaning: Spiritual enlightenment is possible. Mental toughness and flexibility will carry the subject through conflict. However, the "inner flame" can only be ignited through discipline. The realization of inner strength will protect the person from external dangers.

Negative Meaning: The yew fire has been lit too soon, causing confusion and chaos. Alternatively, the inner fire flames too hotly and burns out.

Eolh

Letter: Z

Translation: Elk, Defense

Associated Gods: Valkyries

Aett: Second

Definition: This rune symbolizes humanity reaching for the gods. It is connected to the Valkyries since it is they who bring the heroic fallen to Valhalla. It is also inscribed on Bifrost, the rainbow bridge that leads from Asgard to Midgard. Presumably, its defensive powers are being invoked since Heimdal guards the bridge (and hence entry to Asgard), however, if it is read as being symbolic of humanity's reaching for the gods, then one can see its inscription as a metaphor for the path to divinity.

Positive Meaning: In a reading, Eolh is usually interpreted as the subject striving towards the gods or their ideals. It is often inscribed on spears and shields, though, in the hopes that its defensive properties will provide protection in battle.

Negative Meaning: The negative meaning of this rune is fairly sinister. It usually indicates hidden danger or, worse, consumption or destruction by divine forces — the polar opposite of the desire usually associated with its positive interpretation.

Ethel

Letter: O

Translation: Ancestral Property, Homeland

Associated God: Odin

Aett: Third

Definition: This is the ideal of the homeland. It is not the physical place on the map that the person's home occupies. Rather it is the concept of homeland and all for which it stands in the person's heart and mind. Everything a person's clan, family, and home mean to him or her is embodied in Ethel. This is an ideal state, not any actual one.

Positive Meaning: Read in this fashion, Ethel indicates a stable home and family life. Friendships are strong, clan members are loyal, and the hearth and home are in excellent condition. More propitiously, this rune can indicate a new alliance in the near future.

Negative Meaning: Improper treatment of the home is this rune's negative reading. The subject abuses or is abused by those he or she holds dear. Family ties are weak instead of strong. More sinisterly, improper observance of the tenets of Ethel leads to oppression.

Feoh

Letter: F

Translation: Cattle, Wealth

Associated Gods: Frey, Freya, Njord

Aett: First

Definition: Feoh represents mobile power. It is the flow of energy in society and within the self. It must be kept in motion for it to be beneficial. When it stagnates, it becomes harmful.

Positive Meaning: Foresight is required. Wealth may be coming to the person in the future, but it will take wisdom to acquire it. Additionally, the wealth — whatever form it takes — must be kept in motion. Gold must be spread amongst friends or knowledge must be shared.

Negative Meaning: Greed will undo the character. He or she may horde things to himself or herself, and this will only bring ruin. The power of Feoh is not being kept in motion. It has stagnated and will harm the character.

Ger

Letters: J, Y

Translation: Harvest, Year

Associated Gods: Frey

Aett: Second

Definition: Ger is the natural cycle of life and the progression of the year. When this schedule is properly observed and nurtured, it yields great rewards.

Positive Meaning: Great rewards for right actions are in store. This can be as simple as a bountiful harvest or something more esoteric such as a promotion or riches. Regardless, it is positive reinforcement for doing what is right.

Negative Meaning: This is negative reinforcement, but it is caused by mistiming events or not properly following the natural course (which can include living in defiance of the will of the gods).

Gyfu

Letter: G

Translation: Gift

Associated Gods: Odin, Freya

Aett: First

Definition: This is the magical energy found in Ginnunga Gap, the primordial place that existed before the universe was created.

Positive Meaning: Gyfu binds people together so that they can make something greater than themselves. The sum is greater than the whole of the parts in this act. Consequently, Gyfu is used in sex magic. It is the power that creates such unions.

Negative Meaning: This reading is a caution against becoming overly dependent on the gifts of others. It can mean greed, weakness, poverty, or loneliness.

Hegal

Letter: H

Translation: Hail

Associated Creature: Ymir

Aett: Second

Definition: Hail is a hard and dangerous substance that is projected onto the earth. However, it contains within it "the seed of becoming." Thus, there is a promise of hope and growth in its destruction. However, this transformation is often achieved through crisis. Hegal embodies these two seemingly contrary forces.

Positive Meaning: In this identity, Hegal brings a positive change. It may come through crisis, but such chaos is controlled and not overly destructive. Hegal is also seen as a protective rune. It watches over and shields the subject during times of difficult change.

Negative Meaning: Typically, this connotation indicates a destructive change. Things are torn asunder, and a person's vital powers are obliterated. However, it can also mean that the principal powers of change are being blocked so that growth is not possible.

Ing

Letter: Ng

Translation: Fertility

Associated Gods: Frey, Ing

Aett: Third

Definition: Ing is the male consort of the Earth Mother, Nerthus. This is a very old, Germanic name, and it may be a predecessor of Frey. This rune, which is named for him, is associated with fertility.

Positive Meaning: Ironically (owing to Ing being a male god), the positive meaning of this rune is linked to gestation. The subject of the rune has limitless potential, but the energy associated with it must first be allowed to mature. This rune indicates that the person must bide his or her time, storing up energy and resources until the time is right. By allowing the situation to percolate a bit, greater good can be gained.

Negative Meaning: Negatively read, Ing is seductive and insidious. There is movement but not change. The subject is fooled into thinking things are developing when, in fact, they are not

Is

Letter: I

Translation: Ice

Associated Creatures: Frost Giants

Aett: Second

Definition: Ice, like hail, is another double-edged sword. It attempts to gather things to it and hold them in harmony. But it is a dangerous element that can kill, often unintentionally.

Positive Meaning: Insight and the enhancement of self-consciousness. Problems are solved through inner resources rather than external forces.

Negative Meaning: Is can cause the freezing of resources, particularly inner ones. This leads to an over-emphasis of the ego, causing stupidity or arrogance.

Ken

Letters: C, K

Translation: Torch

Associated God and Creatures: Freya, Dwarfs

Aett: First

Definition: Ken is fire, specifically that of creation. It is the forge's fire, in which new things are created.

Positive Meaning: This is the rune of the craftsman. Those who create or have the will to do so are represented by this rune's power. It also is associated with magic and the creative properties inherent in it. Ken is also symbolic of passion and lust. The fires of desire and the creative power that drives them are a part of this rune.

Negative Meaning: A negative reading of Ken indicates either a lack of creativity or trouble in a relationship — usually a breakup.

Lagu

Letter: L

Translation: Water, Leek

Associated God: Njord

Aett: Third

Definition: Lagu is the rune of water, especially the cosmic waters from which life springs. Water is the source of all life, and Lagu is symbolic of this importance and power. It is also associated with leeks, which represent organic growth.

Positive Meaning: Owing to its association with water, a positive reading of Lagu indicates vital energies that are the key to success. The subject has these flowing through him or her and may turn them to productive use. Water is also a liquid, meaning it is always in a state of flux. Thus, Lagu is often associated with transition or change and is frequently used in initiations, since they are rituals designed to emphasize the ending of one thing and the beginning of something new.

Negative Meaning: In this reading, the rune indicates a fear of change. The subject is unwilling to transition. It can also indicate the blocking of vital energies, damming them inside instead of allowing them to flow productively.

Man

Letter: M

Translation: Human Being

Associated God: Heimdal

Aett: Third

Definition: Man symbolizes human life as an heroic struggle. It is the fight to live well and the bravery the gods desire. It is associated with Heimdal since it is he who guards the entry to Asgard, where only the worthy are allowed to enter.

Positive Meaning: The positive meaning of Man is subtle and complex. It brings an awareness of the truths of human existence and a happiness and peace associated with such knowledge. This rune represents all the best things in humanity and the knowledge and fulfillment of them.

Negative Meaning: The negative reading is the polar opposite of all the things the rune embodies. The subject contemplates too long the concepts of weakness and death. He or she dwells on the bad aspects of human life. He or she fears true knowledge. This leads to disillusionment, depression, and blindness. In short, the affected individual cannot see all the things of which human beings are capable.

Nyd

Letter: N

Translation: Need

Associated Creatures: Nornir

Aett: Second

Definition: Nyd's definition is best summed up by its translation: "need." It is emptiness within that can lead to proper action or fulfillment if correctly recognized.

Positive Meaning: When need is recognized, it leads to fulfillment. The positive reading indicates that a solution will be found or is at hand. Actualization is possible. This is recognition of one's shortcomings or an acceptance of one's fate.

Negative Meaning: This is the danger of following the path of least resistance. The subject takes the easy way out, and thus never fulfills the need inside.

Os

Letter: A

Translation: God

Associated God: Odin

Aett: First

Definition: Os is the creative power of the gods

that formed humanity. It is symbolized by two of the things the gods gave to humanity upon its creation: *ond* (breath or spiritual life) and *odhr* (cognition and inspiration). Much of what human beings are is traceable to the power of this rune.

Positive Meaning: This rune governs song, poetry, and, most importantly, magic. It is the key to incantations and harnessing supernatural power. In fact, all magical items must be inscribed with this rune for their enchantments to be effective.

Negative Meaning: There are a number of ill effects associated with Os. One is the misuse of knowledge or information. Such activity will bring harm to the person who engages in it. It can also mean boredom or intellectual death. The mind is unable to aspire to its full potential. Finally, a negative reading can suggest a danger of being manipulated by others.

Peord

Letter: P

Translation: Dice

Associated Creatures: Nornir

Aett: Second

Definition: Peord is the key to the Nornic (fate) mysteries of the universe. It is the key to the powers of divination and foresight.

Positive Meaning: There is a hidden meaning. Fate is intervening. Such things are largely incomprehensible.

Negative Meaning: Attempting to contemplate such mysteries too long, or dwelling on the information that can be gleaned from such activity leads to addiction to pleasure and madness.

Rad

Letter: R

Translation: Journey, the right order

Associated Gods: Forseti

Aett: First

Definition: This is the law of justice in the cosmos. It is symbolic of the gods' order and emblematic of all that is right and good. Those who seek justice and goodness will travel towards the ideals set forth by the gods, and Rad sometimes is the symbol of that journey.

Positive Meaning: Rad best represents the proper path through the Nine Worlds for those interested in rightness and justice. It is the path of the righteous, and a favorable reading of this rune indicates that the subject is either doing the right thing or heading in the right direction.

Negative Meaning: Like Os, Rad can have several negative meanings. One is spiritual boredom or ennui. There is no growth of the soul or no spirituality in the subject's life. It can also be an indication of bad advice or a warning against such counsel. Finally, it can simply mean injustice.

Sigil

Letter: S

Translation: Sun

Associated God: Balder

Aett: Second

Definition: The sun is emblematic of good counsel. It is the guide in the sky, and following it will lead one home. Additionally, it is dynamic in that it moves too. Thus, it offers sage advice while also staying in motion (and thus change) itself.

Positive Meaning: A positive interpretation is always cause for hope. The individual is receiving good counsel and will benefit greatly down the road. Those who are lost will find their way. Honor and luck are residual benefits.

Negative Meaning: There are two possible interpretations of a negative reading. The first is bad advice. The subject is being given bad information or has chosen his or her advisors poorly. The second is false success gained by dishonorable means. Such success is fleeting because it is not built on truth or honor.

Thorn

Letter: Th

Translation: Giant, Devil

Associated God: Thor

Aett: First

Definition: This rune is the force of destruction and defense. It is symbolized by lightning and thunder and is often associated with Thor's hammer, Mjolnir. It is a protective power. Just

as the thorn protects the rose, so does Thor protect Asgard.

Positive Meaning: Thorn is a force of opposition to the enemies of the gods and their creation, humanity. It is a thrusting power, which reaches out to smite its foes. It can be used to enhance the power of the other runes.

It is also seen as a catalyst for change. It breaks down barriers so that new beginnings can be made. In this capacity, it is associated with fertility and rejuvenation.

Negative Meaning: Thorn can also mean betrayal or defenselessness. As it is the symbol of destruction, when it is read negatively, it brings ruin.

Tiw

Letter: T

Translation: Tyr

Associated God: Tyr

Aett: Third

Definition: As the name implies, this rune is the symbol of the god, Tyr, who is seen as a judge and administrator of what is right. His sacrifice of his hand to the Fenris Wolf is indicative of his belief in truth and doing what is right. He is also very powerful and is seen as a "war god." In this capacity he, and his rune, are often invoked for victory in battle.

Positive Meaning: There are number of meanings associated with a positive reading of Tiw. The first is that justice can be expected. Whatever has transpired will be put right. Secondly, it can be seen as a sign of a victory in battle — if the subject has planned and acted wisely. Finally, it is emblematic of the good of self-sacrifice. By giving of oneself, the subject will win something worth having, as Tyr did in protecting the gods from the Fenris Wolf. However, the sacrifice may be great.

Negative Meaning: When Tiw is read negatively it generally means to stop planning and start doing. The subject is overanalyzing or dawdling. He or she needs to act. It is also a caution against self-sacrifice. While Tyr sets a fine example by sacrificing his hand for the betterment of the gods, it is important to remember not to sacrifice too much. That can be as harmful as it is good. Alternatively, a negative reading can simply be an indication of injustice.

Ur

Letters: U, V

Translation: Aurochs, Untamed Strength

Associated Creatures: Audhumla, Urd

Aett: First

Definition: Ur is representative of the beginning of life. It is the cosmic force of creation. It is associated with Audhumla, the proto-cow that gave birth to Buri, the eventual sire of Odin. Urd, the Fate representing the past is also strongly associated. This rune is about the past, but not just things that have gone before. It represents the beginning of things, the root of present events, and primal creation.

Positive Meaning: Beneficially, this rune conveys vital strength. This strength is of a primal nature, and, if it can be controlled, it can create even greater power. It should properly be used to defend one's homeland, whether that is a place on the map or the homeland of the inner self. Ur is wild and strong, but it can be tamed to be an awesome force.

Negative Meaning: Obsessive protection. This is strength used in the wrong way or at the wrong time. The user either overprotects his or her homeland, or uses the power of Ur to oppress others. It can also be associated with sickness, since this is the homeland of the body turning against its master.

Wyn

Letters: V, W

Translation: Glory, Joy

Associated God and Creatures: Freya and Alfar

Aett: First

Definition: The harmony of elements and entities, particularly those that are derived from the same source.

Positive Meaning: Wyn promotes fellowship and unity. It brings people together and teaches them the joy of harmony. It is the energy that binds things together and is therefore indispensable in magic since it harnesses many different

kinds of energy and unites them. It can be used to bind several runes together to create one harmonious effect.

Negative Meaning: Negatively read, Wyn connotes loss of identity, sorrow, and alienation.

Readings

The most common use for the runes is divination. Vitki cast rune stones in a specified pattern to determine the fortune of the subject of the reading. Three stones are thrown. The first indicates the past and its relevance to the subject. The second connotes the present. The third and final stone foretells the future. The relationship of all three stones to the individual is key. The past and the present move together, merging in the subject to create his or her future.

Interpreting the stones is a difficult business. Each has esoteric meanings, and then there is the matter of determining whether the rune should be read positively or negatively. There are a great number of ways to read runes. Each Vitki chooses which he or she thinks provides the most accurate method of divining the future.

Table 10-2: Rune Readings

Roll 1d6 and consult the chart below to determine from which Aett the drawn rune comes.

Die Roll	*Aett*
1-2	First
3-4	Second
5-6	Third

Roll 1d4 and consult the table below to determine whether a rune should be read positively or negatively.

Die Roll	*Interpretation*
1	Negative
2	Negative but with a positive outcome
3	Positive
4	Positive

For game purposes, a rune reading is handled in the following fashion. Roll 1d6 and consult Table 10-2 to determine from which Aett the rune is drawn. Then roll 1d8 and consult table 10-1 to determine exactly which rune was drawn. The Vitki's player may make these rolls himself or herself, and they should be conducted in order — past, present, then future. However, the GM should roll 1d4 secretly and consult Table 10-2 to determine if the rune should be read positively or negatively.

To interpret the runes, the character makes a Runecraft check. The DC is generally 20, and this gives the Vitki a general understanding of the themes of the stones and whether each should be read positively or negatively. A character may not Take 10 or 20 on this check, nor may he or she retry. Owing to their greater understanding of the runes, Vitki get a +5 Class Bonus to this Skill check. Other characters can attempt to read runes too, but only the Vitki specialize in them.

For every five points by which the character misses the check, he or she misinterprets one of the three runes. Thus, a roll of 15-19, indicates that one rune is misinterpreted. Ten-14 causes the character to read only one rune correctly, and a check of less than 10, indicates that all three runes have been misread. Note that incorrectly interpreting all three runes does not mean the character completely blows it. He or she might simply read them all as the opposite of what they truly mean (for example, reading a rune as positive instead of negative or vice versa). On a roll of 5 or less, the character completely misreads the runes, and comes up with a wholly fictional interpretation. Otherwise, he or she just gets certain aspects of the reading wrong.

The game master may, at his or her discretion, allow for more accurate readings. If the character rolls a 30 on the Runecraft check, he or she perfectly understands what the runes portend. Such a case, though, requires some preparation by the GM. He or she will have to have a good idea what the reading means in terms of the overall campaign. That can be difficult to do on the fly.

The Runes and Adventure Seeds

As the GM, you can use a rune reading to help you plot adventures. Do a standard reading drawing three runes; one for the past, one for the present, and one for the future. Try to connect the rune from the past to some event that has already occurred in the campaign or to something that happened in the distant past but is now important again.

The rune for the present should relate in some way to the current shape of your campaign. For instance, if you were to draw Daeg, you might interpret this as a cause for hope since there was a new beginning about to occur based on current events.

Finally, the future rune is usually the consequences of the party's actions. If it is read positively, this is the thing the characters want to have happen. It is their goal. If it is negative, they should be trying to prevent these events or minimize their consequences.

You don't have to determine whether the runes should be read positively or negatively. Simply look at them and see what they suggest to you. If you like, you can roll to see which aspect they take, giving yourself some more ideas.

For example, if I did this for my own campaign, I might generate the following results. My first d6 roll is a 2, indicating that the past will come from the First Aett. I roll a 4 on the d8, generating the rune, Os. My second d6 roll is a 6. That's the Third Aett, and my 6 on the d8 indicates the rune, Ing. Finally, the final draw, the one for the future, produces a 4 on the d6 (Second Aett), and the d8 indicates a 3, or Is.

Os, we know, is the creative power of the gods, particularly that which was used to form humanity. The rune particularly governs magic. So I think that, in the past, a magical power or device was created. Maybe it is one of the magical items owned by a party member.

In the present, the operative rune is Ing, which is a symbol of fertility. Perhaps the item is just now growing in power. It is maturing to the point where it will soon be ready for great things. I like the negative interpretation of this rune, though: seduction. Maybe the item is seducing the character into using it improperly or others are being seduced to attempt to steal it.

Finally, the future is Is. This rune causes insight and expanded self-awareness. Thus, by completing the quest, the party will come to some important insight. Perhaps this quest is one that will lead to another. Or it may lead to the characters finally conquering a problem that has bedeviled them for a long time: they get the insight necessary to solve it.

As you can see, these are thoughts and ideas. They don't form the adventure for you. They simply give you general concepts that you have to apply to your specific campaign. Still, it can be an interesting means to get your creative juices flowing and suggest some themes to you.

Casting Runes

Casting runes is a different matter than reading them. Here, the character is using the power of an individual rune to create direct magical effects. Magicians and Artificers dabble in this sort of knowledge by inscribing runes on their staves and creations to imbue them with magical power. However, this ability does not use the runes to their full potential.

Vitki and the gods, on the other hand, can cast runes and create spectacular effects with them. They can reach into the universe and unleash the fundamental power that the rune embodies.

Casting a rune is similar to casting a spell. Doing so takes a Standard Action, and those who do not wish to undergo the effects of a rune may make a Saving Throw to resist. The DC to do so is 10 + the Wisdom Bonus of the caster + his or her Class Level (for Vitki) or Character Level (for gods). Drawing on the power of a rune is exhausting, however. A rune-caster can only cast so many a day, which is determined by his or her Class Level (for Vitki) or race (for gods). Note that a god who is a Vitki may do both. He or she gets a certain number per day owing to his or her race as well as the number he or she gets for being a Vitki.

Just as all runes have a positive and negative meaning, each has a positive and negative effect. The rune-caster chooses which he or she will employ. Knowing a rune grants understanding of both. Obviously, the character must choose which effect he or she will use before casting the rune.

Runes have verbal and material components. The caster must have a stone inscribed with the rune as a focus. He or she holds it up and speaks the name of the rune and whether he or she will be using the positive or negative aspect. If the character does not have access to his or her rune stones or cannot speak (including magical effects), the rune cannot be cast. Runes are not affected by anti-magic shields, Dispel Magic, or any other force that impedes magic from being cast, though. They are fundamental forces of the universe and supersede all such concerns.

The Runes' Magical Effects

The runes are listed below in alphabetical order. Each listing contains the rune's Aett, the type of Saving Throw required, duration, and the rune's beneficial and baneful effect. "Caster Level" indicates either the Vitki's Class Level or the god's Character Level. In the case of divine Vitki, choose whichever is more beneficial.

Beorc

Aett: Third

Beneficial Effect: While under the influence of Beorc, the target is renewed and refreshed. He or she gains one Hit Point per Character Level + an additional number of Hit Points equal to the Caster Level of the person casting the rune. Thus, a 10th Level Vitki with a Wisdom of 17, could cast the rune on himself or herself and heal 13 points of damage (10 for being 10th Level + 3 for the character's Wisdom Bonus). As usual, the character cannot exceed his or her maximum number of Hit Points.

Baneful Effect: Sterility and stagnation are two of the consequences associated with the negative reading of Beorc. A character afflicted with the Baneful aspect heals only half the normal amount of damage. All healing spells, Magic Items, and natural healing only nets half of its actual result.

Saving Throw: Fortitude negates.

Duration: Beneficial - Instantaneous; Baneful - 1 day/Caster Level

Daeg

Aett: Third

Beneficial: Hope is awakened to a new level in the character under this rune's beneficial effects. He or she is immune to the effects of Fear and gains a +4 Morale Bonus to all Will Saves.

Baneful Effect: Casting the rune in this manner causes a blast of righteous light that is stunning to all creatures. The caster may affect a number of creatures equal to his or her Level. Those of a Level less than the caster are knocked unconscious for 1d6 rounds. Those of equal or greater Level are Stunned for 1 round.

Saving Throw: Reflex negates.

Duration: Beneficial - 1 hour/Caster Level; Baneful - Special, see description.

Eh

Aett: Third

Beneficial Effect: The recipient of this Rune's effects is imbued with the speed of a mighty courser. His or her movement rate is temporarily doubled. The doubling applies to all movement rates.

Baneful Effect: The target of the baneful effects of Eh is burdened as though he or she were a packhorse overloaded with goods. The character's movement is slowed as if the weight of the equipment he or she is carrying were one level higher than it actually is.

Saving Throw: Fortitude negates.

Duration: 1 round/Caster Level

Eoh

Aett: Second

Beneficial Effect: Flexible and yet hard, the yew tree is a symbol of protection. The character receives a bonus to AC and Saving Throws of +2 + his or her Constitution Bonus.

Baneful Effect: Negative readings of Eoh connote confusion. Characters suffering the baneful effects have difficulty making decisions. Every round, the character must make a Will Save to act. If he or she fails, the character will stand confused about what he or she should do next. The character will defend himself or herself if attacked, gaining all armor and Dexterity Bonuses, but he or she will not counterattack without making a successful Will Save.

When this rune is first cast, the character Saves to resist. If he or she succeeds, the rune has no effect. If the character fails, he or she must Save every round as described above. Making the Saving Throw in one round does not prevent him or her from having to do so again. The rune affects the character for its entire duration if the initial Saving Throw is not made. Further, if that initial Will Save is not made, the character is automatically confused that round.

Saving Throw: Special, see above.

Duration: 5 rounds + 1 round/Caster Level

Eolh

Aett: Second

Beneficial Effect: Eolh provides a +3 AC bonus to those under its positive influence. Additionally, the character benefits as though he or she had had Protection from Evil cast on him or her.

Baneful Effect: Those targeted for its Baneful effects are truly unfortunate. This rune can mean "consumption by divine forces," and, in this case, the universe works against the character. He or she takes as much damage as he or she inflicts. Thus, every time the character scores a hit, both he or she and the target of the strike take the same damage.

Saving Throw: Fortitude negates.

Duration: 1 round/Caster Level

Ethel

Aett: Third

Beneficial Effect: Ethel provides added security for those targeted by its beneficial effects. It creates a shield that extends in all directions for a radius of up to one foot per Caster Level. This shield will absorb 1d4 hit points of damage per Level of the caster before it is destroyed. All damage dealt to the character prior to the shield's collapse is absorbed by the shield instead. Once it falls, any damage in excess of the amount required to knock it down is inflicted on the caster. While inside the shield, the character may fight back, but opponents outside must be attacked with ranged weapons. Those inside the range of the shield may ignore it, but they cannot enter within its walls once it has been erected until it is knocked down. The caster may include other characters within the range of the shield, but they suffer from the same restrictions, and if they leave the safety of it, they cannot return until it is dispelled. The caster cannot leave the radius of the shield because it is centered upon him or her. The shield remains in place until destroyed or willed away.

Baneful Effect: Outside of one's home, one can be at the mercy of the elements, and those targeted by the baneful effects of Ethel are so affected. A target creature is treated as though

under the effects of extreme cold or extreme heat (caster's choice). He or she suffers the full effects as though actually assaulted by the condition in question. Thus, it is possible to get frostbite on a steamy day or suffer from heat exhaustion in the middle of a blizzard.

Saving Throw: Fortitude negates.

Duration: Beneficial - See description; Baneful - 10 minutes/Caster Level

Feoh

Aett: First

Beneficial Effect: Any financial transaction or discovery by a person under the effect of this Rune results in an extra 5%-10% profit. Roll 1d6 + 4 to determine the percentage increase. Explanations of the results include better haggling, purer metal content in coins found, etc.

Baneful Effect: Same as Beneficial but with a corresponding decrease in value instead of the increase.

Saving Throw: Will negates.

Duration: Permanent but only for the transaction in question.

Ger

Aett: Second

Beneficial Effect: The character has great insight and works at the proper time. He or she may add his or her Wisdom Bonus to all Skill checks where it would not normally apply and to all attack rolls, damage rolls, and Saving Throws. For Wisdom-based Skill checks and Will Saves, the character may add his or her Wisdom Bonus twice.

Baneful Effect: The target character is plagued by bad timing. He or she acts at the wrong moment. All die rolls suffer a -10 Circumstance Penalty in the first round of this rune's effect. Every round thereafter, the penalty is reduced by two as the character struggles to find his or her way back to proper timing. Thus, the round after the rune is cast, the target acts with a -8 penalty. The following round, the penalty is -6, and so forth until there is no penalty.

Saving Throw: Will negates.

Duration: Beneficial - 10 minutes/Caster Level; Baneful - Special, see description.

Gyfu

Aett: First

Beneficial Effect: Gyfu connotes the ability to work together to create something larger. By using this rune, the caster can create a synergy between several individuals cooperating on a task. The Vitki or god casts this on several individuals at once. The number of people he or she can affect is equal to 2 + his or her Wisdom Bonus. One of the targets must be the "leader" of the activity (the character who is making the Skill or Ability check). Each additional character provides a +3 Circumstance Bonus to the check. The usual individual checks at DC 10 to cooperate are unnecessary.

Baneful Effect: Characters suffering from the baneful effect of this rune have become greedy, weak, and overly dependent on the work of others. They suffer a -3 Circumstance Penalty to all die rolls and to AC.

Saving Throw: Will negates.

Duration: Beneficial - one action; Baneful - 1 round/Caster Level.

Hegal

Aett: Second

Beneficial Effect: Hegal is a rune of protection. When cast, the character becomes surrounded by whirling hailstones that intercede between blows. He or she gains a bonus to AC equal to +4 + the character's Wisdom Bonus.

Baneful Effect: This application summons a violent storm that produces heavy rain and rock-sized hail. The caster can direct a number of hailstones equal to his or her Caster Level to strike targets in the storm's path. Each stone inflicts 2d6 + 2 points of damage. Once all of the available hail damage is applied, the god can no longer direct their fall, but the storm continues unabated for the duration of the Rune's effect. The storm's radius is one mile.

Saving Throw: Beneficial - None, Baneful - Reflex for half damage.

Duration: Beneficial - 2 rounds +1 round/Caster Level; Baneful - 10 minutes/Caster Level.

Ing

Aett: Third

Beneficial Effect: The rune connotes gestation and germination. An individual blessed with it is able to accelerate the process of gathering strength. The target character is refreshed as though he or she had eight good hours of uninterrupted sleep. Fatigued and Exhausted characters fully recover.

Baneful Effect: The baneful aspect of this rune is a curse to mystics. It causes them to act before their resources have been properly gathered. All spells or runes cast by the afflicted character suffer a 50% Spell Failure chance in addition to any other Spell Failure penalties or chances.

Saving Throw: Will negates.

Duration: Beneficial - Instantaneous; Baneful 1 round/Caster Level.

Is

Aett: Second

Beneficial Effect: Is is the essence of ice. Those beneficially affected by Is have the aspects of the hardiest of winter creatures. The affected character does not need to make Saving Throws in cold weather (below 40) and must only make them every hour instead of every 10 minutes in frigid weather (below 0 F). Additionally, the creature gains a +3 Circumstance Bonus on all Saving Throws against magical cold-based attacks.

Baneful Effect: The character projects a Ray of Cold that inflicts 1d6 points of damage per Level of the caster.

Saving Throw: Beneficial - Will negates; Baneful - Reflex for half damage.

Duration: Beneficial - 1 hour/Caster Level, Baneful - Instantaneous.

Ken

Aett: First

Beneficial Effect: Ken is the fire of creation and is often linked positively with human lust. A character under the influence of this rune gains a +4 bonus to his or her Charisma. He or she is more appealing and has an easier time with any Charisma-based Skill or power.

This rune can also be used to reduce the Experience cost by half whenever creating a Magic Item.

Baneful Effect: This rune can be used to negatively impact others' relationships. Characters targeted by it lose four points of Charisma and must make a Charisma check to convince friends or family to do much of anything. The character has a difficult time making others listen to him or her.

Saving Throw: Will negates.

Duration: 10 minutes/Caster Level.

Lagu

Aett: Third

Beneficial Effect: Lagu is the source of life; it is the fundamental energy of the universe. A character under its beneficial effects gains 2d8 + the caster's Wisdom Bonus in temporary Hit Points. These Hit Points are lost first in combat. They do not count against the beneficiary's total. All of the temporary Hit Points are lost before the target begins losing any of his or her own.

Baneful Effect: Vital energy leaves the target at an extraordinary rate. He or she takes double damage from every blow that lands while under the influence of this rune.

Saving Throw: Fortitude negates.

Duration: 1 round/Caster Level.

Man

Aett: Third

Beneficial Effect: A person under the influence of this Rune is more powerful and glorious in all that he or she does. Targets temporarily gain one additional Level and all the benefits (Hit Points, modifiers, etc.) that accompany it. Note that this Level gain does not grant knowledge or abilities that the character wouldn't already have. Thus, while a spellcaster would be able to cast more spells than normal, he or she wouldn't have access to new spells the character couldn't or didn't previously know.

Baneful Effect: Characters under the baneful effects of Man are stripped of some of their glory and, consequently, some of the abilities that accompany it. The baneful effect reduces a character temporarily one Level. All benefits of the character's

proper Level are lost until it is restored.

Saving Throw: Will negates.

Duration: 1 round/Caster Level.

Nyd

Aett: Second

Beneficial Effect: Nyd is a recognition of the need within. Those under the beneficial effects can actualize this need into positive results. The character can subtract any number of points from his or her Armor Class and add them to attack rolls and Saving Throws. The equation is selected when the rune is invoked and lasts for its entire duration.

Baneful Effect: Need is overpowering for those under the baneful effects. The target takes 1d6 + the Wisdom Bonus of the caster in Ability Damage. The caster determines which Ability is targeted. Note that characters reduced to a 0 Constitution score are killed.

Saving Throw: Fortitude negates.

Duration: Beneficial - 1 round/Caster Level; Baneful - Ability Damage is temporary and is recovered normally.

Os

Aett: First

Beneficial Effect: While under the effect of this rune, the recipient is especially insightful. The powers of the mind allow him or her to succeed where normally he or she might fail. The character may Take 20 on any one Skill check without spending the requisite time and even if he or she could not normally do so.

Baneful Effect: Those under the rune's negative influence are in danger of being manipulated. The baneful effect does exactly that. The caster may attempt to manipulate the individual in question as though he or she were the victim of a Charm Person spell.

Saving Throw: Will negates.

Duration: Beneficial - 24 hours or until used; Baneful - 1 hour/Caster Level.

Peord

Aett: Second

Beneficial Effect: As the key to the Nornic mysteries, this rune conveys supernatural vision. The character may cast this rune to gain specific information about what the right thing to do is or to gain a general vision. With the former, the character may ask the GM one specific question. The game master is bound to answer truthfully, but he or she does not have to be specific in the reply. That is, unless the question is a yes/no one, the GM can answer however he or she likes, and that could be vague.

Alternatively, the character can ask for a vision. Like all visions, it is filled with metaphors that must be deciphered for it to make sense.

Baneful Effect: Targets of this effect become addicted to the pleasures of life. The character becomes overly interested in money, food, drink, and men or women. Whenever he or she becomes confronted with these temptations, he or she must make a Will Save at a DC equal to 10 + the Wisdom Bonus of the caster + the Caster Level. If it is failed, he or she overindulges until sated (has as much money as he or she can carry, is absolutely stuffed, passes out, or is incapable of further orgasms, depending on the situation). The character will do this at the expense of whatever he or she should be working on at the moment and to the exclusion of his or her friends. The target will defend himself or herself if attacked but will not otherwise participate in activities that interfere with his or her pleasure. The only way to remove the effects of this rune is through a Remove Curse spell.

Saving Throw: Will negates.

Duration: Beneficial - Instantaneous; Baneful - Permanent.

Rad

Aett: First

Beneficial Effect: The caster is able to summon a steed to serve him or her. Upon this rune having been cast, the nearest unridden horse will come to serve the character. The amount of time it takes for the horse to arrive is completely dependent on its distance from the caster, however, the absolute furthest a steed will come is one mile. The horse obeys the summons as quickly as possible. While under the effects of the summons, it will be completely loyal to the caster.

Baneful Effect: The caster may target a single steed of any type. If the rune is successfully cast, the courser flees (carrying its rider) from the god at top speed in the most convenient direction available, which may take it in harm's way. The steed receives a Will Save to negate the effects, but the throw is made by the mount itself, not its rider.

Saving Throw: Will negates.

Duration: Beneficial - 1 hour/Caster Level, Baneful - 1 round/Caster Level.

Sigil

Aett: Second

Beneficial Effect: Sigil brings honor and luck. When under the influence of this rune, the character may either re-roll one die roll or take a +4 Luck Bonus on a chosen die roll. This effect lasts until it is used, but a character cannot have Sigil cast on him or her more than once. Its effects are not cumulative.

Baneful Effect: The light of the sun can also cause harm. A target creature is Blinded by the brilliance of the sun's power.

Saving Throw: Reflex negates.

Duration: Beneficial - Instantaneous; Baneful - 1 round/Caster Level.

Thorn

Aett: First

Beneficial Effect: Thorn is directed force. A character under the influence of this rune gains a benefit to all die rolls. The bonus is 1 + the target's Constitution Bonus (minimum bonus of +1).

Baneful Effect: A character targeted for negative effects suffers a penalty to his or her AC equal to 1 + the Constitution Bonus of the caster.

Saving Throw: Will negates.

Duration: 1 round/Caster Level.

Tiw

Aett: Third

Beneficial Effect: Tiw is the rune of Tyr, whose concern for justice is legendary. It takes great wisdom to administer justice. The benefactor of this rune gains 1d6 +2 points of Wisdom temporarily.

Baneful Effect: The negative reading of this rune implies that the character needs to stop thinking and start acting. The baneful effect makes this impossible. The target has difficulty acting. He or she may only take half the number of actions normally allowed him or her. Thus, if a character could normally make two attacks in a round, he or she can only make one. If the character usually gets only one attack, he or she may only attack every other round. The target can still defend himself or herself, getting the full benefit of AC, but he or she cannot take any offensive actions and may otherwise only make a Partial Move.

Saving Throw: Will negates.

Duration: 1 round/Caster Level.

Ur

Aett: First

Beneficial Effect: The recipient of this rune gains 1d6+2 points of Strength temporarily.

Baneful Effect: The target loses 1d6+2 points of Strength temporarily.

Saving Throw: Fortitude negates.

Duration: 1 round/Caster Level.

Wyn

Aett: First

Beneficial Effect: The beneficial effects of this rune are difficult to cast, but they are powerful. The character must make a Will Save at DC 20 to pull this off. If he or she can do it, the character may combine the effects (beneficial or baneful) of two runes into a single effect. That is, both effects are applied to the target. By raising the DC by five, the character can add another rune. So at DC 25, three effects can be used. At DC 30 four effects can be used, and so forth. However, the character must declare which runes and effects he or she will be using before casting. Thus, if the character wants three effects, the DC is 25. If the Will Save fails, the entire rune-casting is ruined. Casting Wyn counts as two of the character's allotted runes for the day, regardless of how many runes he or she actually combines.

This rune is more draining than some of the others. After casting it, the character is

Fatigued for 1d4 hours. For each additional rune used in the casting, the character is Fatigued an extra hour. Thus, combining four runes would cause the caster Fatigue for 1d4+2 hours. The character is Fatigued regardless of whether the casting effect was successful or not.

If this rune is used to combine effects targeted on an unwilling creature, the target makes a single Will Save against Wyn. If it is successful, the entire combination fails. If the Saving Throw is not successful, all of the effects are applied as though the target had failed to Save against each of them.

Baneful Effect: The character loses his or her identity. He or she has a complete memory loss regarding who he or she is. The character has access to all of his or her Skills and Feats and can use them. He or she simply can't remember anything (including his or her name) up to the point that the rune was cast.

Saving Throw: Beneficial - Special, see description; Baneful - Will negates.

Duration: Beneficial - per other runes cast; Baneful - Permanent, may be removed with Remove Curse spell

Chapter 11
Sejdr

Sejdr is a special form of magic that is only available to Glytha and Spákona. Only these women have the ability to harness its strange energies and work its power. This makes them highly respected and greatly feared.

Sejdr is essentially a projection of one's soul into the spirit world. There, the practitioner can communicate with spirit animals known as *fylgia*, act on the mundane world through magic, and fight other Glytha and Spákona in magical mental combat.

The Spirit World

The spirit world resembles that of the mundane for the most part. This has more to do with the traveler's perception than what it really looks like. In essence, the spirit world looks like what the Sejdr practitioner knows because that is what she can understand. It's actually composed of ether, a magical substance that cannot be held.

It does look different though, owing to its mystical nature. It has a vaguely foggy appearance to it. It is not filled with mist so much as things do not have hard edges. Everything seems just a little bit out of focus, a little bit translucent, and a little bit bright. Living things in the spirit world have a glow to them that they do not in the world of the mundane.

A character traveling in the spirit world can see people, places, and things in the physical world. She just cannot interact with them in any way without special powers. While in the spirit world, one's actions are confined to other spirit-creatures. There are some restrictions on this as well. Not everyone who travels the spirit world can interact with it. See the Glytha and Spákona classes in Chapter 8 for more information.

Forms

Characters who enter the spirit world take on an idealized appearance. They resemble what their minds think are the perfect images of themselves. This appearance can be affected consciously, but, for the most part, a character traveling in the spirit world looks as she would most like to look.

The Gods and the Spirit World

The gods are no more capable of entering the spirit world than a normal person is. Their Plane Travel ability does not include the ethereal realm. However, there are immortal Glytha (numerous Valkyries began as Glytha). Such characters can project themselves into the spirit world just like their mortal cousins can. They are subject to all the same class restrictions as are characters of the Lesser Races, but they can otherwise use all of their abilities.

Deities killed in the spirit world only suffer temporary death, even if their bodies are on their home realm (Asgard or Vanaheim). Their souls, which are performing the actions, are not on the world that holds final death for them. A god "killed" in the spirit world is driven back to his or her body. He or she recovers normally thereafter. During Ragnarok, all bets are off. A god can be killed anywhere, including the spirit world.

Fylgia

Fylgia are spirit-animals that are attached to all PC races. They watch over and protect their chosen ward, defending him or her from spiritual attacks and carrying messages to him or her in dreams. Some believe that a character's prayers are conveyed to the gods via his or her *fylgia*. Glytha and occasionally Spákona use them to send messages. The latter is a much rarer case because *fylgia* fear Spákona.

When a character is created, the GM rolls to determine his or her *fylgia*. There is no relationship between rank and *fylgia*. A jarl can be guarded by a humble chipmunk, and a slave can be warded by a mighty dragon. Some think that worthiness in the eyes of the gods is a determining factor, but there is no evidence to suggest that this is the case.

A character never knows what his or her *fylgia* is unless it chooses to reveal itself somehow.

While it talks to the character in his or her dreams, it does so by giving the character visions, not by sitting down and having a chat with him or her. Thus, it has to deliberately reveal itself for the character to know. Characters can learn if their visions are legitimate if a Glytha speaks to his or her *fylgia* and then gives this information to him or her.

Table 11-1 lists creatures that can serve as *fylgia*. The GM rolls randomly for each character in the campaign to determine what spirit-creature serves as his or her guide and guardian.

A fylgia has all the abilities of a normal creature just like it. Thus, a squirrel *fylgia* has all the same advantages and disadvantages of a regular

Table 11-1: Fyglia

Roll 2d6 and consult the chart below to determine the strength of the character's fylgia.

Die Roll	*Strength*
2	Powerful
3	Weak
4	Average
5	Weak
6	Average
7	Average
8	Average
9	Weak
10	Average
11	Weak
12	Powerful

Weak Fylgia

Roll 1d10 and consult the table below to find the character's fylgia.

Die Roll	*Fylgia*
1	Badger
2	Bat
3	Cat
4	Chipmunk
5	Fish
6	Rat
7	Squirrel
8	Songbird
9	Weasel
10	Roll Again

Average Fylgia

Roll 1d10 and consult the table below to determine the character's fylgia.

Die Roll	*Fylgia*
1	Boar
2	Brown Bear
3	Deer
4	Eagle
5	Hawk
6	Horse
7	Mountain Lion
8	Owl
9	Raven
10	Wolf

Powerful Fylgia

Roll 1d20 and consult the table below to determine the character's fylgia.

Die Roll	*Fylgia*
1-2	Air Elemental*
3-4	Blink Dog
5-8	Celestial/Fiendish Creature†
9	Dragon#
10	Fire Elemental*
11-13	Giant Eagle
14-16	Giant Owl
17-19	Orca
20	Remorhaz

** This creature is the Medium-size variety.*

† Roll on the Average Fylgia chart to determine the type of creature. Celestial creatures protect Good characters. Fiendish creatures protect Evil ones. Neutral characters should roll again.

 # This is a Very Young Dragon. Choose a type that matches the character's Alignment.

Chipmunk

Size: Diminutive Animal

Hit Dice: 1/4d8 (1 Hit Point)

Initiative: +1 (Dexterity)

Speed: 20 feet, climb 20 feet

AC: 15 (+4 Size, +1 Dexterity)

Attacks: Bite +0 (1d2)

Face/Reach: 1 foot x 1 foot / 0 feet

Special Attacks: Nibble

Special Qualities: None

Saves: Fortitude +0, Reflex +3, Will +0

Abilities: Str 2, Dex 12, Con 10, Int 1, Wis 10, Charisma 11

Skills: Listen +4, Spot +2, Wilderness Lore +4

Feats: None

Alignment: Always Neutral

Nibble (Ex): A chipmunk that succeeds in a Bite Attack may attempt a Grab Attack as a Free Action. Because the target has no real leverage and the chipmunk isn't attempting to pin it, the DC for this check is only 5. If it succeeds, the chipmunk may latch on to the target and automatically inflict its Bite damage every round until it is removed. Doing so requires a Reflex Save from the target at DC 11.

squirrel. A red dragon has all the abilities of a normal red dragon.

Also a creature's form has little bearing on where it can go in the spirit world. For instance, an orca would normally be confined to the ocean, but in the spirit world, this is not really the case. The ethereal realm is fluid in its makeup, the creatures that inhabit it can move through it easily.

Despite the fact that every place in the spirit world corresponds to a place in the world of the mundane, creatures of every variety can go wherever they wish. Thus, if the character is in the middle of the ocean on a boat in the spirit world, his or her wolf *fylgia* can still come to his or her aid at that exact location.

Despite the shape that they take, *fylgia* attack in the spirit world the same way Glytha and Spákona do. They use the standard Base Attack Bonus for their creature type, but they add their Charisma Bonuses to the attack roll instead of their Strength Bonuses. Damage is determined according to the creature's power and level as shown on Table 11-2.

Like Glytha and Spákona, a *fylgia*'s AC is equal to 10 + it's Charisma Bonus. Every three levels it has adds +1 to the AC. Spirit-creatures also get any additional bonuses they would get from their creature type (such as a dragon's scales) and Size Bonuses (and penalties), but they do not get the creature's Dexterity Bonus since combat in the spirit world is more mental than physical.

Fish

Size: Tiny Animal

Hit Dice: 1/2d8 (2 Hit Points)

Initiative: +1 (Dexterity)

Speed: 0 feet, swim 50 feet

AC: 16 (+2 Size, +4 Dexterity)

Attacks: Bite -3 (1d3)

Face/Reach: 2 1/2 feet x 2 1/2 feet / 0 feet

Special Attacks: None

Special Qualities: None

Saves: Fortitude +0, Reflex +6, Will +0

Abilities: Str 1, Dex 18, Con 10, Int 1, Wis 11, Charisma 6

Skills: Jump +6, Swim +8

Feats: None

Alignment: Always Neutral

Songbird

Size: Tiny Animal

Hit Dice: 1/4d8 (1 Hit Point)

Initiative: +2 (Dexterity)

Speed: 10 feet, fly 40 feet

AC: 16 (+4 Size, +2 Dexterity)

Attacks: Bite -1 (1d2) or Claws -1 (1)

Face/Reach: 1 foot x 1 foot / 0 feet

Special Attacks: Blind

Special Qualities: None

Saves: Fortitude +0, Reflex +4, Will +0

Abilities: Str 1, Dex 15, Con 10, Int 1, Wis 11, Charisma 14

Skills: Intuit Direction +6, Spot +6

Feats: None

Alignment: Always Neutral

Blind (Ex): A songbird can fly into another creature's eyes and attempt to blind it. It need only succeed at a Melee Touch Attack to do so. If the attack is successful, the target creature cannot see anything; the bird flaps and claws at the eyes. All attacks on any other targets are made with a -6 Circumstance Penalty, and the target loses its Dexterity Bonus (if any). The creature remains Blinded until the bird can be cleared away somehow.

The songbird can attempt to put the creature's eyes out while it is Blinding. It makes a separate attack roll (which does not prevent it from continuing to Blind the target). The victim does not receive an armor bonus (including Natural AC) and gets only half its Dexterity Bonus. If it scores a hit, the creature must make a Reflex Save at DC 17. If it is successful, the target takes 1 point of damage. If it fails, its eye is put out. A songbird must put out each eye individually. This ability can only be used on creatures of Small Size or larger.

Table 11-2: Fylgia Spirit Combat Damage

To determine a fylgia's damage, cross-reference its level with its strength on the chart below.

Level	*Weak*	*Average*	*Powerful*
1-3	1d4	1d6	1d8
4-6	2d4	2d6	2d8
7-9	3d4	3d6	3d8
10	4d4	4d6	4d8

Fylgia Powers

In addition to any natural abilities a creature possesses, it also has *Fylgia* Powers. Weak *fylgia* begin the game with one power. Average and powerful *fylgia* start with two. As a *fylgia* gains in level (see below), it gains more powers. Table 11-3 lists the powers a *fylgia* can gain. Each power is described below. All *fylgia* powers are Spell-like Abilities.

Weasel

A Weasel has all of the abilities that it has in the standard game with one addition. It has the Nibble Special Attack of a Chipmunk and Squirrel. The DC to free oneself from this attack is 12.

Squirrel (cont.)

Targets hit by three nuts or more must make a Will Save at DC 12. If it is successful, the target may continue as though nothing has happened. But the squirrel will continue to throw nuts. For every two additional nuts that hit the target thereafter, another Will Save must be made, with the DC rising by two each time. If the Saving Throw is ever failed, the target flies into a rage and becomes obsessed with driving the squirrel off or (better yet) destroying it. The squirrel will run from any confrontation, but, when the target gives up, the squirrel is likely to come back and start pestering the unfortunate again. Will Saves must be attempted again from the last point at which the character failed. When two or more squirrels gang up to pull this particular stunt, it can become infuriating in short order.

Squirrel *fylgia* will use their Hurl Nut ability to disrupt spells. Any Glytha or *Spókana* using a magical ability must make a Concentration check at DC 12 or Hurl Nut ruins the ability.

Nibble (Ex): A squirrel that succeeds in a Bite Attack may attempt a Grab Attack as a Free Action. Because the target has no real leverage and the squirrel isn't attempting to pin it, the DC for this check is only 5. If it succeeds, the squirrel may latch on to the target and automatically inflict its Bite damage every round until it is removed. Doing so requires a Reflex Save from the target at DC 13.

Squirrel

Size: Tiny Animal

Hit Dice: 1/2d8 (2 Hit Points)

Initiative: +3 (Dexterity)

Speed: 20 feet, climb 20 feet

AC: 15 (+2 Size, +3 Dexterity)

Attacks: Bite -2 (1d3) or Hurl Nut -2 (see below)

Face/Reach: 2 1/2 feet x 2 1/2 feet / 0 feet

Special Attacks: Hurl Nut, Nibble

Special Qualities: None

Saves: Fortitude +0, Reflex +5, Will +1

Abilities: Str 3, Dex 16, Con 11, Int 2, Wis 12, Charisma 8

Skills: Listen +4, Spot +2, Wilderness Lore +4

Feats: None

Alignment: Always Neutral (though some believe otherwise)

Hurl Nut (Ex): Squirrels are extremely irritating animals that seem to delight in harassing others. Their constant chattering and upbraiding of other creatures (to say nothing of their deliberate teasing of dogs and humans) clearly indicates that they don't seem to understand they are only rodents.

The Hurl Nut ability is exemplary of this attitude. When a squirrel decides that it wants something to go away, it throws nuts and other objects at the target. A nut only deals 1 point of subdual damage, but the squirrel can throw one every round, and this becomes extremely exasperating, especially if the squirrel chatters at the target while so engaged. Most animals will move on in the face of this abuse, but humans and dogs always seem to endure it.

Table 11-3: Fylgia Powers

Choose a power from the list below or roll 1d20 to generate one randomly.

Die Roll	*Power*
1	Bestow Curse/ Remove Curse
2	Bestow Gift
3	Blind/ Remove Blindness
4	Blink
5	Charisma Drain
6	Command
7	Damage Reduction
8	Energy Resistance
9	Extra Attack
10	Fast Healing
11	Intelligence Drain
12	Invisibility
13	Life Drain
14	Mage Armor
15	Magic Missile
16	Regeneration
17	Remove Disease
18	See Invisibility
19	Spell Resistance
20	Wisdom Drain

Bestow Curse/Remove Curse: This ability works exactly like the spells of the same names. The fylgia must succeed in a melee touch attack to use them offensively, and the spirit-creature may use either function (but not both) once per day for every three levels.

Bestow Gift: This ability is geared directly to the kind of creature that the *fylgia* is. With it, it can temporarily give one of its essential abilities to the character it wards. The duration of this effect is 5 rounds + 1 round for every three levels the *fylgia* possesses. This ability is only usable once per day.

Each creature has a unique set of abilities. The gift that each animal can present is detailed below.

Weak

• *Badger:* Wards of the badger may go Berserk one extra time per day if they have the Berserk Feat (see page XX). If the character does not, he or she may go Berserk as if her or she had the Feat. If the character's Constitution is less than 12, it is considered to be 12 for the duration of this gift.

• *Bat:* The bat can grant its Blindsight ability.

• *Cat:* The character benefits from the Cat's Grace spell.

• *Chipmunk:* The character gains a +4 bonus to all Listen and Spot checks.

• *Fish:* The character benefits from the effects of a Haste spell. There are no side effects.

• *Rat:* The character gains 1d4+1 points of Wisdom temporarily.

• *Squirrel:* Squirrels are experts at storing things for lean times. They pass this ability onto their wards in the form of 1d8+4 Hit Points. These extra Hit Points are used first in battle. The character does not lose any Hit Points of his or her own until after these are all used. They vanish at the end of the gift's duration.

• *Songbird:* The character gains 1d4+1 points of Charisma temporarily

• *Weasel:* Expert thieves, weasels grant a +4 Bonus to all Pick Pocket and Move Silently checks.

Average

• *Boar:* The character gains 1d4+1 Intelligence temporarily.

• *Brown Bear:* The character benefits from a Bull's Strength spell for the duration of the gift.

• *Deer:* The character gains the deer's swiftness. His or her Movement Rate is doubled while under the influence of this ability.

• *Eagle:* The eagle grants its great sight to the character. He or she may see objects from very far away as though they were up close. The range of this ability is 100 feet per level of the fylgia.

• *Hawk:* The hawk is an expert hunter. It grants its wards a +2 bonus on all attack rolls for the duration of the gift.

• *Horse:* The rune, Rad, symbolizes the perfect union between horse and human — two very different beings working together to succeed at one goal. The horse grants this unity to those it protects. Affected characters gain a +4

bonus to all Diplomacy checks, and a +2 bonus to all other Charisma-based skill checks.

• *Mountain Lion:* A fierce hunter, the Mountain Lion grants a +2 bonus to all damage checks in combat.

• *Owl:* The owl shows great skill hunting in the dark from above. It grants its wards the Weapon Finesse Feat for the duration of the gift. The character can choose to use it on a weapon that would not normally be eligible.

• *Raven:* An ominous bird of potential doom, the raven grants the ability Cause Fear to its protectorates. Range for the fear is 25 feet in any direction.

• *Wolf:* The wolf imparts its Scent ability. Recipients of it have full knowledge of various scents (making it possible for them to distinguish them) from the moment they gain this ability until the second it leaves.

Powerful

• *Air Elemental:* The character gains the Improved Initiative Feat while under the influence of the gift.

• *Blink Dog:* The character benefits from a Blink spell for the duration of the gift. Note that the half of the time he or she spends on the ethereal plane is spent in the spirit world. He or she can see and act there normally too.

• *Celestial/Fiendish Creature:* The *fylgia* grants its Smite Evil or Smite Good power (depending on which it has) to its beneficiary.

• *Dragon:* The dragon grants its breath weapon to the character. Like a dragon, he or she cannot use it again for 1d4 rounds after it is used. The duration of this gift may run out first.

• *Fire Elemental:* The character gains the Burn ability. The DC for the Saving Throw is 14.

• *Giant Eagle:* Giant Eagles grant their Evasion ability. If the character already has Evasion, he or she gets Improved Evasion for the duration of the gift.

• *Giant Owl:* Giant owls attack in near silence. They convey this ability to their wards. The character is able to cast Silence while under the influence of this gift.

• *Orca:* The character gains the benefit of the Endurance spell for the duration of this ability.

• *Remorhaz:* This creature gives its beneficiary its Tremorsense ability.

Blind/Remove Blindness: The creature is capable of blinding an opponent. It must succeed at a Melee Touch Attack to do so, and the defender gets a Fortitude Save at DC 12 + 1 per level of the *fylgia*. Average *fylgia* gain an additional +1 bonus and powerful ones get a +2 bonus. This ability is usable three times per day.

Blink: The creature can Blink as though it were a Blink Dog. Blink Dogs that get this ability via a random roll should roll again for a different ability.

Charisma Drain: Charisma is vital in the spirit world. *Fylgia* with this ability can drain it away. The creature inflicts 1d4 points of Charisma damage to the target. He or she can make a Will Save at DC 12 + the level of the *fylgia* for half damage. This ability is usable three times a day.

Command: The *fylgia* can cast the Command spell as though it were a Cleric of the same level. It must be able to communicate with the subject for the spell to work.

Damage Reduction: The creature has DR 10/+1.

Energy Resistance: The creature has a resistance rating of 10. Choose the energy type for which the *fylgia* benefits.

Extra Attack: The *fylgia* is swift and wily. It gets one extra attack per round at its highest attack bonus.

Fast Healing: The spirit-creature heals 2 Hit Points of damage per round.

Intelligence Drain: This ability works exactly like Charisma Drain except that it targets Intelligence.

Invisibility: The *fylgia* may turn invisible as though an Invisibility spell had been cast upon it. It may do this three times per day plus one additional time for every three levels it has.

Life Drain: The *fylgia* is able to siphon away the target's life force. When it uses this ability a small black spot flies from the *fylgia* to its target. The range for this ability is five feet per level. It must succeed on a Ranged Touch

Attack for this power to work. If the attack lands, the target creature loses 1d8 Hit Points plus an additional number of Hit Points equal to the *fylgia*'s level. This ability can be used five times per day plus one additional time for every three levels the spirit-creature has.

Mage Armor: The *fylgia* can cast the Arcane Spell of the same name. It can use this ability three times a day.

Magic Missile: The creature can cast Magic Missile as though it were a Wizard of the same level. It can use this ability three times a day.

Regeneration: The regeneration rate for this ability is 5.

Remove Disease: This ability works exactly like the Divine spell of the same name. It can be used once per day per level.

See Invisibility: The *fylgia* can see invisible creatures at all times.

Spell Resistance: The rating for this ability is 10.

Wisdom Drain: This ability works exactly Charisma Drain, but it targets Wisdom.

Fylgia Levels

Fylgia advance in level like their wards do. They gain half as much experience as their protectorates. Every time the character gains experience, his or her *fylgia* gets half as much. When a *fylgia* advances in level, its Base Attack Bonus increases. For every three levels it gains, the spirit-creature can increase its damage rating (see Table 11-2).

Additionally, when the creature advances a level it can choose either to roll another Hit Die or it can select another *Fylgia* Power. The choice is up to the GM, but he or she can consult with the character's player to see if there is a preference.

Death

Fylgia can be killed and this is always bad for the people they protect. A character whose *fylgia* dies takes damage based on the power of the spirit-creature. The character takes one die of damage for every level of the deceased *fylgia*. The damage die is determined by the creature's power. Weak *fylgia* inflict d6 damage. Average ones deal d8, and a powerful *fylgia*'s die type is d10.

The character dying is bad for the *fylgia* as well. Normally, the creature dies along with the character it was sworn to protect. However, there are some exceptions. First of all, if the character becomes immortal (either dies an heroic or a cowardly death), the *fylgia* continues to protect it in the afterlife.

Secondly, a *fylgia* may choose to protect another character. Such a person is either related to the dead character in some way (a good friend, child, spouse, etc.) and in need of a *fylgia* or another person who does not have one. Some theorize that this is how powerful *fylgia* come to protect lesser people, but there is no evidence to support such a claim.

To survive the death of its ward, a *fylgia* must make a Fortitude Save at DC 15 + the level of its protectorate. Success indicates that the spirit-creature can live on. If the Saving Throw fails, the creature dies with its ward. GM's may choose to allow the *fylgia* to live without a roll if they would like to assign the spirit-creature to the player's next character.

Chapter 12
The Nine Worlds of Yggdrasil

This chapter is devoted to the cosmos in Norse mythology. There are nine worlds that make up the universe, each populated (not quite exclusively) by a different kind of creature. Each world is detailed briefly so that you will be able to set adventures there. Also included is an overview of the creation myth, which leads to the shape of the Nine Worlds.

In the Beginning. . . .

The universe begins in a sort of formless void known as Ginnunga Gap. Here forces of heat and cold met and created moisture. From these drops grew Ymir, the proto-giant. According to most legends, he was the first creature to appear in the universe. Not long afterwards, Audhumla, the proto-cow is formed from rime drippings. Milk flows from her udders and nourishes Ymir.

Ymir sweated as he slept, and the perspiration created a male and a female under his left arm. These individuals then became the progenitors of the frost giants.

Audhumla licked salt blocks to feed herself, and in three days time, Buri emerged from the salt. He was the first of the Aesir. Thus, the Aesir and the frost giants are inextricably linked. Audhumla fed Ymir, who gave birth to the frost giants, while Audhumla's own feeding (which provided nourishment to Ymir) created the Aesir.

Buri had a son named Bur, who married Bestla, the daughter of the giant Bolthorn. They had three sons: Odin, Vili, and Ve. This further links the Aesir with the giants, since they have now interbred, and the first son, Odin, will become the leader of the gods.

Here, though, things take a turn for the worse. The three sons of Bur killed Ymir. The proto-giant's body crashed to the ground, crushing many of the frost giants, and his blood drowned the rest. Bergelmir and his family were the only frost giants to survive this cataclysm, and all frost giants today are descended from them.

Odin, Vili, and Ve took Ymir's body to Ginnunga Gap and formed the cosmos from it. His body formed the earth, and his blood formed the seas. From his skull, they made the heavens. Maggots that ate Ymir's flesh formed the svartalfar.

The killing of Ymir is a kind of patricide. Because he sired the giants, and Bur married a giant, Odin and his brothers effectively slew their great-grandfather (the number of generations is not clear in the epics, but there is a close relationship between Ymir and Odin in terms of lineage). That this crime forms the foundation for the universe and the gods' rule over it may contribute to the inevitability of Ragnarok. The gods' rule is based on an injustice, particularly since Ymir's death caused the wholesale slaughter of nearly all of the frost giants.

The World Tree

At the center of the universe stands an enormous ash tree named Yggdrasil. This is the world tree, and the Nine Worlds can be found within its limbs. At its base is Mimir's Well, whose waters can impart wisdom and visions if drunk. The gods come here every day to judge. While they live and feast and train in Asgard and Vanaheim, they come to Yggrasil to do their work: run the universe.

Yggdrasil has three large roots. Each stands above a different realm. One runs to Nifleheim; another to Asgard, and the third to Jotunheim.

The tree is beset with certain dangers (to itself). It is rotting on one side — a potential symbol of the eventual demise of the rule of the gods. Beneath the tree, the great dragon Nidhogg gnaws at the roots. Four deer chew its leaves.

At the top of the tree is an eagle. In its branches is the pesky squirrel, Ratatosk. He delivers messages between the eagle and Nidhogg, but they are always malicious, thereby sowing discord between the two. The eagle's name is not given, but it is very knowledgeable.

The Geography of the Nine Worlds

How exactly the Nine Worlds fit together around Yggdrasil is something of a mystery. According to *Grimnismâl*, "Three roots stand on three roads / From under the ash of Yggdrasil; / Hel lives under one, under another, the frost giants, / Human beings under a third." However, Snorri writes, "Three roots of the tree hold it up and stretch out widely. One is among the aesir, the second among the frost giants where Ginnunga gap used to be, the third stands over Nifleheim."

Thus, in one version of the legend, one of the tree's roots stretches to Midgard where humans live. In another, the aesir occupy the third position. There is no mention of the other worlds in the mythos, though certainly they must exist somewhere in relation to the tree since it sits at the center of the universe.

The issue is complicated further by potential doublings in the myths. There is some evidence to suggest that dwarfs and svartalfar are the same creatures. They are ugly, hate everyone, and are extremely talented at crafting magic. Moreover, both sprang from the death of a cosmologically important character - the svartalfar from maggots that ate Ymir's flesh and the dwarfs from the blood of Mimir. The similarities are striking. Thus, it is possible that what is called Svartalfheim in one legend is called Nidavellir in another.

For purposes of the game, though, we have chosen to treat them as separate races. It therefore falls to us to determine where the other six worlds exist. We've chosen to go with Snorri's description of the roots because, if the gods go to Yggdrasil to judge, it makes sense that they have a direct path there along one of the roots. The rest of the universe is grouped around them. Yggdrasil lays its roots in three of the Nine Worlds, but all of them surround it.

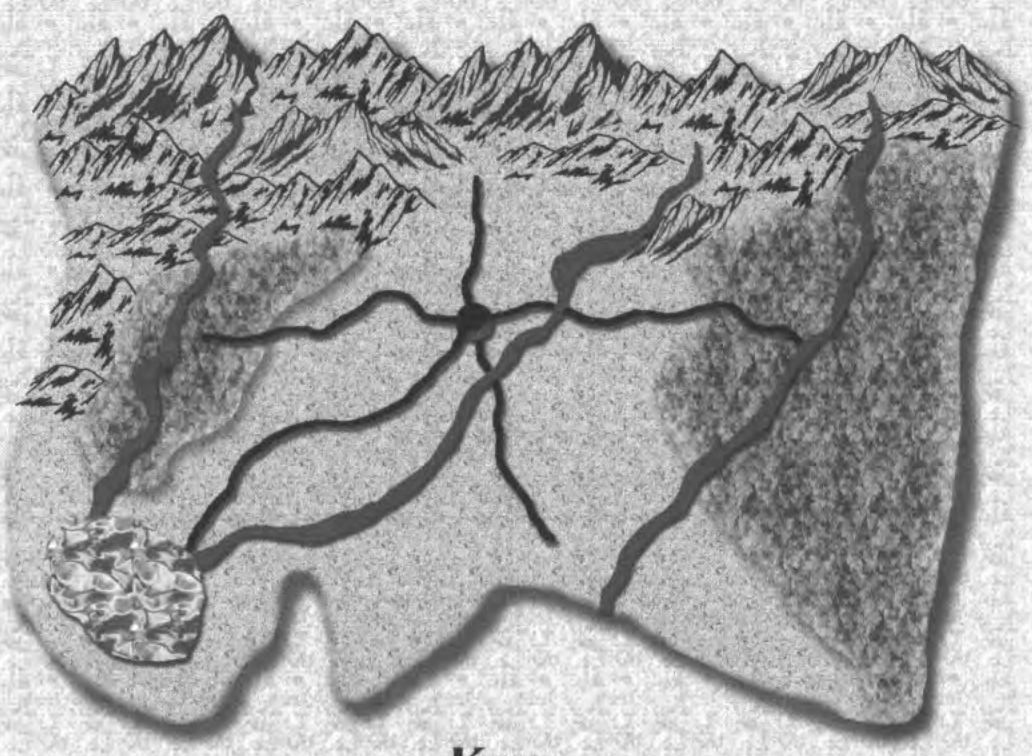
We've therefore chosen to set the universe up in blocks of three. Each group of worlds has one of the roots planted in its core world. However, all of the Nine Worlds are interlinked. Thus Asgard, Vanaheim, and Alfheim are off one root (with the anchor being in Asgard). Nidavellir, Midgard, and Nifleheim run off another (with the anchor being in Nifleheim). Finally, Svartalfheim, Jotunheim, and Muspelheim lie off the third root (with the anchor being in Jotunheim).

Odin once hung on the tree in a self-sacrifice that granted him wisdom. This may explain the tree's name. "Yggdrasil" means "Ygg's Steed." Ygg is another name for Odin, and the hanged "ride" the gallows. Thus, the tree may be named for Odin's sacrifice.

The Nine Worlds

The Nine Worlds of Yggdrasil are as follows: Asgard (home of the Aesir), Vanaheim (home of the Vanir), Midgard (home of human beings), Alfheim (the land of the liosalfar), Svartalfheim (land of the svartalfar), Jotunheim (realm of the frost giants), Muspellheim (home of the fire giants), Nidavellir (the realm of the dwarfs), and Nifleheim (land of the dead). Each is detailed below with the exception of Midgard. Because this is the land of the humans, the first five chapters of the book, which are dedicated to Viking culture, suffice. Each world is described with regard to physical appearance, denizens, and what travelers there may need to know. A few adventure seeds are also provided.

Alfheim



Key:

=Mountains

=Forests

=Rivers

=Roads

= Central Entry Point

=Lake

Alfheim

Alfheim is the most idyllic of the Nine Worlds. Only Vanaheim comes close. The home of the liosalfar, it is wooded and pastoral. The sun shines every day. Not all things exist in harmony, but, by way of comparison with many of the other worlds, Alfheim is downright tame.

Geography

The geography of Alfheim is the most varied of the Nine Worlds. It has rolling meadows, thick glades, tall mountains, beautiful fjords, and waterfalls. In short, it is pretty close to earthly ideas of paradise.

One usually enters the realm in its center. This is an enormous meadow which has a small road in its center. The traveler begins at a center point, and may choose to follow it in one of five directions. These go north, east, west, southwest, and south. Of course, one need not follow the road.

The road is really a path. It's well-maintained inasmuch as it is well-traveled and therefore quite worn. The north leads to a large sea faced by mountainous cliffs. Within, there are magnificent fjords and spectacular glaciers. There are few settlements that way, but the sea can be crossed to reach Vanaheim. One must still possess the means to move from world to world (otherwise one simply sails to the end of the ocean), but it is crossable and many Vanir choose to come to Alfheim in this manner, particularly Frey, who uses his collapsible boat, Skidbladnir.

To the east and west are thick forests. Both feature heavy alf populations. These communities are generally predisposed to be friendly to visitors, especially humans and Vanir. They generally get on well with each other and cooperate in times of trouble.

To the south and southwest, the temperature turns considerably warmer. The few humans who travel to Alfheim find that the south of the realm is nothing like the weather back home. It is warm and pleasantly so virtually all year long. There are fewer trees here to give a break from the sun, so life generally moves at a slower pace. In the southwest is a large lake. There are numerous settlements on it and these are as quick to welcome visitors as their vernal cousins. It is generally cooler in the southwest than in the general south, owing to the lake, but the humidity is also higher.

In both the south and the southwest, sex is the favorite pastime of the people. It is warm, luxurious, and languorous, and this leads to less clothing and more time to pursue leisure-time activities. Resources are plentiful year-round in the southwest, giving the denizens an unconcerned approach to living, since there always seems to be enough of what is needed. Things are only a little harder in the south, where there is a brief period of two months where nothing grows and so a little planning is in order.

There are several way stations along each road where travelers can stop and rest if they desire. These are always well stocked with food and water (and blankets up north). It takes roughly five days to travel a road to its conclusion.

Weather

There is never bad weather in Alfheim. Most of the time, it is sunny with few clouds. The temperature runs from about 50° F in the north to about 85° in the south. Those are summertime temperatures. The temperature can dip down to about 25° in the north in the wintertime. It rarely gets below 60° in the south.

It never storms in Alfheim. It does rain (or snow) about twice a week, but such precipitation takes the form of slow, soaking showers. Many occur overnight, leaving the days fine, but a mid-afternoon summer shower is seen as a treat in the meadows of central and southern Alfheim.

The world does have seasons. Each section of the realm goes through a distinct spring, summer, fall, and winter. Summer is the longest season of the year throughout Alfheim. It lasts for nearly six months and is almost universally pleasant. Fall lasts for about three months and is a glorious season in the east and west where the woods all turn colors. Winter lasts only a month except in the north and is followed by a two-month spring. In the northland, fall lasts only a month or two. Snow falls everywhere except the southwest. While winter is shorter in the south, it does see snowfall at least once a year. The truest seasons are seen in the east and west.

Denizens

Virtually every kind of creature can live in Alfheim. Its temperate climate makes it ideal for a wide variety of wild life. For the most part, it is a safe place to travel, but there are creatures there who consider alfar (and humans) food. There are also some rare evil creatures that seek to undo the peace of the realm (or take advantage of it), and the liosalfar do have to defend themselves from such incursions. While it is idyllic, Alfheim is by no means a place with no danger. GM's should feel free to populate it with whatever sorts of creatures seem to make sense for their campaigns.

Liosalfar Culture

Liosalfar are considered foolish by many other races for they do not like to go to war, and they are not especially interested in work. They do drink, which offers some redemption for them, but they are not passionate about it, which humans and gods simply do not understand.

Most of their time is spent in pursuit of two things: sex and magic, not necessarily in that order. Liosalfar are fascinated by magic, and they study it wherever possible. They believe that in understanding how it works, they can achieve a greater understanding of the universe and, by way of association, the gods. Liosalfar will attempt to acquire Magic Items not because they want them for themselves, but because the magic is interesting to them. When a breakthrough is made, this information is quickly shared with the rest of the community, and each alf takes pride in having made an important discovery.

Liosalfar also love sex. They absolutely adore it and engage in it given nearly any opportunity. This is especially true in the southwest of Alfheim where the conditions are more idyllic than anywhere else. There are considerably fewer female liosalfar than male, though, and this presents a challenge for coupling. Under the circumstances, female promiscuity is not frowned upon. In fact, it is encouraged.

This disparity in the population is largely the men's fault. Alfar have a natural form of birth control, wherein they must choose to procreate. That is, the male must elect to give the seed to the female. Therefore, not all orgasms are created equal among alfar. Most of them naturally result in no pregnancy. And, because the male often gets caught up in the heat of the moment, he often forgets to choose procreation, even if it was his intention to do so.

To further offset the ratio of men to women, liosalfar have been known to kidnap human women and children. They use the women as sexual partners and raise the children themselves (to help perpetuate the race). They have no ill intentions in this regard. They don't think of themselves as kidnappers and rapists. It doesn't occur to them that the humans they capture might not want to come with them. A few spells or potions usually remove all resistance, thereby reinforcing this belief. For this reason, liosalfar will be savagely hunted by the relatives of those they kidnap. Stealing someone's will by means of magic is a disgusting tactic to the average Viking. It's important to note, though, that liosalfar do not engage in nonconsensual sex. If the object of his desire says, "no," the alf does not press. Of course, he may find more sinister means to get her to say "yes" via magic, but the woman still has to consent. Most people do not consider this proper consent.

Adventures in Alfheim

Of all the worlds in which your characters can adventure, Alfheim is definitely the safest. However, there are a wide variety of creatures in the realm that can offer sufficient challenges for any party. This is one of the best "off-Midgard" realms to which to send humans or other members of the Lesser Races in terms of survivability.

Most journeys here involve meeting with an alf. However, with the broad variety of denizens, there are any number of reasons for a character to come to Alfheim. A rare few even come to vacation. Some adventure ideas are provided below:

- A liosalf has kidnapped a human female for sexual purposes. Her family wants her back. The party must journey to Alfheim, find the culprit, and rescue the woman before he has his way with her and before she has lost her will to leave.
- A magical creature has escaped into the woods in Alfheim. It must be caught and returned to its proper place or some disaster

will occur. The party must travel to the magical realm and find the creature before it can do more damage than it has already done.

• A well-meaning liosalf has stolen a key Magic Item. He or she simply wanted to understand how it worked. However, a frost giant has learned of the theft. He or she plans to steal it from the alf and use it against the gods. The missing item must be found before it falls into the wrong hands.

Asgard

Home to the Aesir, Asgard is arguably the most important of the Nine Worlds. It is from here that the laws of the universe are issued, where the gods hold court, and where Odin (and many other gods) has his residence. All warriors aspire to go to Valhalla (and therefore Asgard) when they die. Here, the gods live and the noble dead practice on the field of battle every day, preparing for the end times. At night, everyone feasts in honor of the day's courage.

Geography

Asgard is the smallest of the Nine Worlds, taking up just enough space to house the gods and their armies. It is surrounded almost entirely by a large wall capable of repelling even the giants (see sidebar on page 138). The wall was never finished, though, and its opening corresponds to the entrance of Asgard at Bifrost. This is the Rainbow Bridge that leads to Midgard. The entrance is guarded by the god, Heimdal. Only those he permits may enter the gods' demesne. When Ragnarok begins, he will wind the Gjallor Horn, calling his fellow Aesir to battle.

Inside, Asgard is beautiful and verdant. It goes through the seasons every day, beginning with spring in the morning, summer in the afternoon, autumn in the evening, and winter at night. Every day is pleasant — the best of each season.

At its center is the Plain of Ida. Here, the honored dead battle every day. They prepare themselves for the last battle by practicing here. Those who are slain are made whole again in time for the evening's feast.

There are numerous homes and halls in Asgard. All of the Aesir make their home here, and some have famous or elaborate houses. Balder's

The Asgard Wall

Asgard is surrounded almost entirely by an enormous wall capable of repelling even giants. A great builder came to the gods and proposed that he build it for them. He agreed to do so in 18 months with only the help of his horse, Svadilfari. The payment for the task was to be Freya, the sun, and the moon. The gods felt certain this was a terrific bargain because they believed it impossible for him to complete the project on time, which would allow them to renege on the payment.

However, with only three days left on the clock, it seemed certain that the wall would, in fact, be completed on time. The Aesir became furious and blamed Loki, who had convinced them that they would not have to pay. Loki changed himself into a mare and seduced Svadilfari. The stallion chased Loki all over Asgard, forcing his master to attempt to find him and preventing work from getting done on the wall.

In the end, the wall was not completed on time, and the gods refused to pay. Furious, the builder quit the project, and it was never finished. Loki eventually gave birth to Sleipnir, Odin's mighty steed, as a result of the coupling with Svadilfari.

Some believe that this is why Ragnarok will occur. The Aesir demand honor and courage, but they did not show either in this deal that helped defend their home. Their order is therefore corrupt and flawed. It will eventually crumble.

home, Breidablik, will not allow any unclean thing to enter. His son, Forsetti, has a house with a roof of silver and gold.

The most famous and important location, though, is Valhalla. This is the Hall of the Dead, where those who died honorably are brought by the Valkyries. It is the dream of every warrior to be selected to reside here in the afterlife. Every morning, the dead rise from their slumbers therein and make their way out to the Plain of Ida. When they have finished with their battles, they return. At night, a great feast is held here in honor of their courage. This feast is attended by the Aesir as well as the dead.

Elsewhere, Idun, wife of Bragi, tends a garden wherein grow the fabulous golden apples that give the gods immortality. Only the gods are permitted to eat these since they grant eternal life. Especially heroic *einheriar* — the best and bravest of the honored dead — are sometimes given one of them, making a god of the rewarded individual.

Denizens

Asgard is populated almost exclusively by the Aesir and the dead. There are a few notable exceptions. The first is the magical goat, Heidrun. She lives on the roof of Valhalla and feasts on the leaves of the tree, Laerad. She produces mead from her teats, and this is drunk nightly in the hall during the daily feast.

Eikthyrnir is the name of a hart (deer) that also runs along the roof of the hall. It eats the leaves of Laerad too, but its horns drip water into Hvergelmir, the source of water in the cosmos. Thus, Eikthyrnir is the origin of water. Between Eikthyrnir and Heidrun, Valhalla is the source of water and mead, two holy gifts from the gods to humanity.

Sehrimmir is a giant boar that is slaughtered every day. It is killed and spitted and provides food for the nightly feast. Each morning, it lives again, and the process is repeated.

Aesir Culture

The Aesir travel every day to Yggdrasil to pass judgment. This is how they rule the universe, and they do it more or less with an iron fist. For the most part, they enforce their ideas of honor and courage on the cosmos, punishing those who disobey and rewarding those who do.

However, there are exceptions. First, the Aesir do not always deal fairly. They reneged on the deal for the wall to be built, causing it not to be finished. The lied to Fenris about binding him, causing Tyr to lose his hand. They steal treasure from the giants, the svartalfar, and, when possible, the dwarfs. For all of their talk of honor and courage, they engage in such behavior themselves when it best suits them to do so.

Of all the gods, Loki is perhaps the worst offender. He is clever and tricky, and he looks for opportunities to have his wit recognized. He has sired several monstrous children, including Fenris and Hel. He is jealous of Balder and the love he receives and thus tries to impress or punish others (usually both) in his quest for approval. His antics have gotten both him and the rest of the Aesir into trouble on numerous occasions, and he is symbolic of the way the gods actually are as opposed to how they would like to be.

Adventures in Asgard

Most adventures (for the gods) start in Asgard. It is the jumping-off point of the story. Few adventures actually take place there. However, mortals could attempt to go to Asgard to consult the gods on some important mission. They would first have to gain permission to enter the sacred world from Heimdal. Such things are not easily accomplished. GM's are encouraged to make their players work very hard to convince them that they should go to Asgard.

Jotunheim

Jotunheim is not a place for the faint of heart. It is the land of the frost giants, and that makes it a very dangerous place to begin with. Frost giants (also known as Jotuns) are only one of its many hazards, though. It is populated by a variety of deadly monsters, and it is in many respects a frigid wasteland where only the hardiest survive for long. A journey to Jotunheim is a momentous undertaking for a god. For a mortal, it is often the mission of a fool.

Geography

Jotunheim is one of the largest of the Nine Worlds. It stretches out for many, many miles.

encompassing enough land to span all the nations of Midgard and more. It is eternally winter there, and the whole of the realm is made up of snow-capped mountains, glaciers, and tundra. Jotunheim does experience seasonal change, but summer (such as it is) lasts only for a month and is characterized by temperatures only slightly above freezing. Autumn lasts

Table 12-1: Weather in Jotunheim

Roll d% and consult the chart corresponding to the proper season.

Spring

Dice Roll	*Result*
01-20	Calm
21-25	Rain
26-35	Strong Wind
36-40	Thunderstorm with Strong Wind and Rain
41-50	Thunderstorm with Strong Wind and Sleet
51-55	Severe Wind
56-60	Thunderstorm with Severe Wind and Rain
61-70	Thunderstorm with Severe Wind and Sleet
71-75	Thunderstorm with Severe Wind and Snow
76-80	Windstorm
81-85	Thunderstorm with Windstorm and Rain
86-95	Thunderstorm with Windstorm and Sleet
96-00	Blizzard with Windstorm

Summer

Dice Roll	*Result*
01-35	Calm
36-45	Rain
46-55	Strong Wind
56-70	Thunderstorm with Strong Wind and Rain
71-80	Severe Wind
81-85	Thunderstorm with Severe Wind and Rain
86-90	Windstorm
91-95	Thunderstorm with Windstorm and Rain
96-00	Thunderstorm with Windstorm, Rain, and Hail

Autumn

Dice Roll	*Result*
01-25	Calm
26-30	Rain
31-35	Snow
36-45	Strong Wind
46-55	Thunderstorm with Strong Wind and Sleet
56-60	Thunderstorm with Strong Wind and Snow
61-70	Severe Wind
71-80	Thunderstorm with Severe Wind and Sleet
81-85	Thunderstorm with Severe Wind and Snow
86-95	Windstorm
96-00	Blizzard with Windstorm

Winter

Dice Roll	*Result*
01-20	Calm
21-30	Snow
31-40	Strong Wind
41-50	Storm with Strong Wind and Snow
51-60	Severe Wind
61-70	Storm with Severe Wind and Snow
71-80	Windstorm
81-00	Blizzard with Windstorm

for about a week — just enough time to alert the denizens to the fact that winter is returning. Spring tends to be longer — usually two months — but it features alternating periods of warming and sudden storms that plunge temperatures back down.

The northern and western edges of the realm are studded with enormous mountains that stretch up into the clouds. These forbidding peaks are home to the castles of the most powerful giant jarls. Huge glaciers run down the mountainsides like rivers of ice emptying out into the frozen tundra of the plains below.

Jotunheim is bordered on the east by a large sea that separates it from Asgard. While small communities of giants do live on the shore, there are no ports or cities providing access to or from the harsh land. The terrain between the tundra and the sea is marked by large rolling hills that are difficult to navigate in bad weather owing to the snow lifted into the air during storms.

Weather

The climate in Jotunheim is extremely harsh, and traveling there has some additional concerns. For the most part, the sky is continually overcast. It is slate grey and covered with clouds. There is a 10% chance per day that the sun will shine. If so, the sky is mostly cloudy 60% of the time, partly cloudy 30% of the time, and clear only 10% of days where the sun actually shines.

Any day when the sun doesn't shine also presents the chance for a storm. How severe it is depends largely on the season, although there have been terrible storms during every part of the year. Table 12-1 provides a means by which to generate weather randomly. First roll a d10 to determine the sky conditions. If the result is a "10," roll to see how much sun is present. Otherwise, consult the chart for the proper season and roll to see what happens.

An explanation of some of the results follows.

Calm: The wind is Light to non-existent and there is no precipitation of any kind.

Rain or Snow: The wind is Light to Moderate, and the precipitation is gentle unless it is combined with a storm.

Strong Wind, Severe Wind, or Windstorm: If these results appear by themselves, then the weather is blustery, but not necessarily stormy (unless it's a Windstorm). If they appear in conjunction with a storm, then use them to gauge the wind speed of the storm and any effects associated with it.

Thunderstorm: The storm is accompanied by lightning, the severity of which is determined by the season. In spring, one lightning bolt drops every minute dealing 10d6 points of damage to anything it hits. In summer, one bolt drops every five minutes dealing 7d6 points of damage to anything it hits. In autumn, the rate is one bolt every five minutes, but the damage is only 5d6. Any exposed character has a 3% chance to be hit by a lightning bolt. The odds increase by 1% if he or she is carrying a metal weapon and by another 2% if the character is wearing metal armor.

Table 12-2: Storm Intensity

Roll a d6 and consult the table below each hour the storm continues to determine its strength.

Die Roll	*Result*
1-2	Storm Weakens; Reduce Wind Strength by 1 Level*
3-5	Storm Continues at Current Strength
6	Storm Gathers Strength; Increase Wind Strength by 1 Level†

** If the Wind Strength drops to Moderate or less, the storm ends.*

† Maximum Wind Strength is Windstorm. If the Wind Strength is already this high, treat this result as 3-5.

Table 12-3: Jotunheim Temperatures

Roll d% and consult the chart that corresponds to the correct season.

Spring

Dice Roll	*Result*
01-40	Balmy
41-90	Cold
91-00	Dangerously Cold

Autumn

Dice Roll	*Result*
01-25	Balmy
26-80	Cold
81-95	Dangerously Cold
96-00	Extreme Cold

Winter

Dice Roll	**Result**
01-60	Cold
61-85	Dangerously Cold
86-00	Extreme Cold

Storm: A storm has all the effects of a Thunderstorm but there is no lightning. All storms, whether they are Thunderstorms, Blizzards, or regular storms, have a duration. Once the storm begins, roll on Table 12-2 to determine how long it goes on. The maximum duration for any storm is three days. If, after 72 hours it continues, the storm suddenly loses strength and dies out.

Blizzard: In addition to all the other effects of the storm, snow comes down at a substantially accelerated rate. Visibility is reduced to zero. The chill of the wind and the driving snow forces characters caught in a Blizzard to make Fortitude Saving Throws as though they were exposed in cold weather (DC 15 + 1 per previous Save every hour or take 1d6 points subdual damage).

Temperature

The weather conditions alone are not all that visitors to Jotunheim must fear. The temperature is also their enemy. Aside from summer, there is no season where the risk of extreme temperatures isn't a concern. To generate a temperature range, consult Table 12-3. The effects of temperature are in addition to any other conditions resulting from the weather. Note that seemingly illogical results such as "Dangerously Cold" and "Rain" are compatible when you account for wind chill. Still, if the results don't make sense to you, scrap them and re-roll.

Explanations of the results are discussed below.

Balmy: The temperature is actually pleasant (for Jotunheim). Air temperatures range from 40 to 50 degrees Fahrenheit.

Cold: Things are normal. Air temperature varies from 40 degrees Fahrenheit to about 0. Properly clothed characters operate normally. Exposed ones must make a Fortitude Save every hour at DC 15 + 1 for every previous Save attempt or take 1d6 points of subdual damage from the cold per the usual rules for cold weather.

Dangerously Cold: The air temperature has slipped below 0 degrees Fahrenheit and ranges as low as -30. Properly dressed characters must make a Fortitude Saving Throw every hour as though they were exposed in Cold conditions. Exposed characters must Save every 10 minutes at DC 15 + 1 for every previous Save attempt or take 1d6 points of subdual damage from the cold.

Extreme Cold: In addition to the air temperature dropping so low, the wind chill has made the air feel even colder. Effective temperatures are -50 to -100 degrees Fahrenheit. Properly dressed characters must Save every 10 minutes as though they were exposed. Exposed characters take 1d6 points of normal damage every 10 minutes until they get to shelter or freeze to death.

Denizens

Jotunheim is the land of the frost giants, but they are not its sole inhabitants. A wide variety of monsters also populate the frozen realm. Generally speaking, any creature with the Cold Subtype can be found in Jotunheim. It also makes a good home for monsters with "any mountain" in their climate description, though

keep in mind that the temperatures are universally cold so only monsters that can thrive under those conditions will be found here.

Virtually everything that lives in Jotunheim is dangerous and most hate the gods. When creating encounters for this world, keep in mind that they should be difficult.

Size

It's important to note that everything in Jotunheim is big. It is a land populated by giants, and everything around them is giant as well. Creatures encountered here should have their size adjusted where necessary to reflect this. As a general rule, if you want to use a monster in Jotunheim, it should be at least Large in Size. A Jotun's dog is a big challenge for a mortal and can cause some trouble for a god owing simply to its size. Use your common sense since some of the creatures in the game are already meant to be "giants." In general, though, bigger is definitely better.

This applies to everything about Jotunheim. The trees are like redwoods. The mountains are like Everest. Everything is expansive. A giant's house is a mansion to a puny mortal or god. A giant's castle is akin to a city by way of comparison. Don't forget that the Jotuns are very worthy foes to the gods. Everything about Jotunheim is large and challenging and dangerous.

Frost Giant Culture

Frost giants value strength over nearly anything else. They are consummate bullies who dominate those who are lesser than they and who hold onto their belongings and lands through force. Their organizations are tribal, and tribes are ruled by a jarl. However, much like a pack of dogs, the ruler is the one who is the strongest and can maintain that status. Jarl is not an hereditary title. It belongs to the one who can claim it and hold it.

Consequently, frost giants are among the most savage fighters in the Nine Worlds. They fight with utter abandon and show a pronounced tendency towards cruelty. While reprehensible, this behavior is only partially attributable to sadism. There is a fundamental survival urge at work as well. Giants are cruel to their opponents because they want to make sure that someone they defeat can't come back to get them later and because they want to send a warning to everyone else who might clash with them. The theory is: the opponent you just defeated can't recover enough to be a threat in the future, and no one else will bother you because they won't want some of the same treatment.

Despite this brutish behavior, frost giants value cleverness as well. Cunning is another form of strength to the giant's mind because it aids one in the defeat of enemies. A foe that is outwitted is as vulnerable as one who has been beaten down. This has the dual effect of making frost giants extremely dangerous opponents and leaving them with a base culture. Because each giant is constantly vying for position in the tribe, and cunning is seen as another form of strength, Jotuns are constantly plaguing each other with a series of nasty pranks and feuds. Typically, one giant outwits another in a bid to move up the social ladder. Angered, the second Jotun strikes back in some equally devious manner. This trend continues with each backstab escalating the conflict until one of them has had enough, and the contest turns violent.

In many ways, this constant infighting is what has kept the frost giants from ever effectively assembling against the gods. They are too busy fighting each other to focus on the gods. On the other hand, it has made them extremely clever. When they do fight the gods, this deviousness makes them even more difficult to overcome.

Adventures in Jotunheim

Jotunheim is not a place for any but the most powerful of characters. It is, after all, the land of the frost giants, and they are no friends of the gods. Mortals make excellent meals, and gods who take them lightly discover the foolishness of their ways. Make sure that your players understand that Jotunheim is a very, very dangerous place before allowing them to travel there.

There are two essential problems with adventuring in Jotunheim. The first is the wilderness nature of the realm. Most encounters occur out of doors with monsters that are looking for food or other mischief. The elements are a constant hindrance to the characters, and there

never seem to be enough places to simply stop to rest and recuperate.

The second is that there are virtually no creatures in Jotunheim that can be deemed friendly. Whether the characters are gods or mortals, the monsters they encounter are either large beasts looking for food or protecting their lairs, or they are evil creatures opposed to the party's goals. There are no allies to be found here save those who share a common enemy with the characters. Even then, these unscrupulous types will betray the party at the first opportunity.

Don't forget also that frost giants are clever. While they enjoy standing toe-to-toe and going at it, they like winning more than the fight itself. Thus, they will seek to set traps, mislead the characters, lie, and generally engage in any behavior designed to give them an advantage. In particular, a frost giant knows that a god is a dangerous opponent. He or she will therefore seek to put the deity at a disadvantage before attacking him or her.

Presented below are several adventure ideas:

- An important character is kidnapped and taken to Jotunheim. The party must rescue him or her. Because giants value cleverness, the rescue will involve some contest of wits.

- An important character has been struck down by poison. This ignoble death will prevent him or her from going to Valhalla. The poison is slow-acting, though, and there may be time to save him or her. The antidote, though, must be made from a flower that only grows in the mountains of Jotunheim. The party must undertake the journey to procure the flower and get back home before time runs out.

- A giant has found a means to share the vicious Jotunheim winter with Midgard. With no spring in sight, Midgard may be plunged into an eternal winter. The party must find the giant responsible, bring him or her to justice, and undo the sinister plot.

Muspelheim

Muspelheim is the land of the fire giants, and it is no more hospitable than Jotunheim. It is a hot and fiery world that is unlike any other realm in Yggdrasil. The place is hot and is dotted with active volcanoes. The ground is rich from the soil that is constantly spit up, but little grows there because of the frequent eruptions. Like Jotunheim, only the hardiest creatures live here, where one must fight the environment as much as the others who live there.

Geography

Getting around in Muspelheim is difficult. The landscape is constantly changing owing to the regular volcanic activity. A path that existed only days ago can be wiped out entirely. Passage to a jarl's castle can be completely blocked or destroyed in a day's time. Likewise, new paths are constantly opening, and building a fortress is often an exercise in futility since it can be destroyed or at least made indefensible in a moment's notice.

There are six major volcanoes in Muspelheim. They grow larger each month with their eruptions. There are also fault lines throughout the landscape causing earthquakes. Every day the GM should check to see which of them erupt. It is possible for none or all of them to go on a single day. The latter days are truly catastrophic.

The base chance for any single volcano to go off is 15%. Each day that it does not, the chance increases by 1%. Roll d%. If the number generated is equal to or less than the base chance for the volcano to erupt, it does so (resetting its chance to 15% the following day). Check each volcano each day.

When a volcano erupts it can be seen from anywhere in Muspelheim. The realm is small enough that all six peaks can be seen in the distance no matter where one stands. These volcanoes are extremely powerful and spit their lava a considerable distance. Anyone with five miles of an erupting volcano must make a Reflex Save at DC 10 to avoid being hit by lava and hot ash. Failure causes the character to take 2d6 points of damage for three rounds. Characters within one mile must make a Reflex Save at DC 20 to avoid being hit. This Save must be made every five rounds until the character gets out of range. Characters on or in a volcano when it erupts are in deep trouble. They must make a Reflex Save at DC 30 to avoid being hit by flying lava and a Reflex Save at DC 15 to avoid being doused in it. Characters doused in lava

Muspelheim

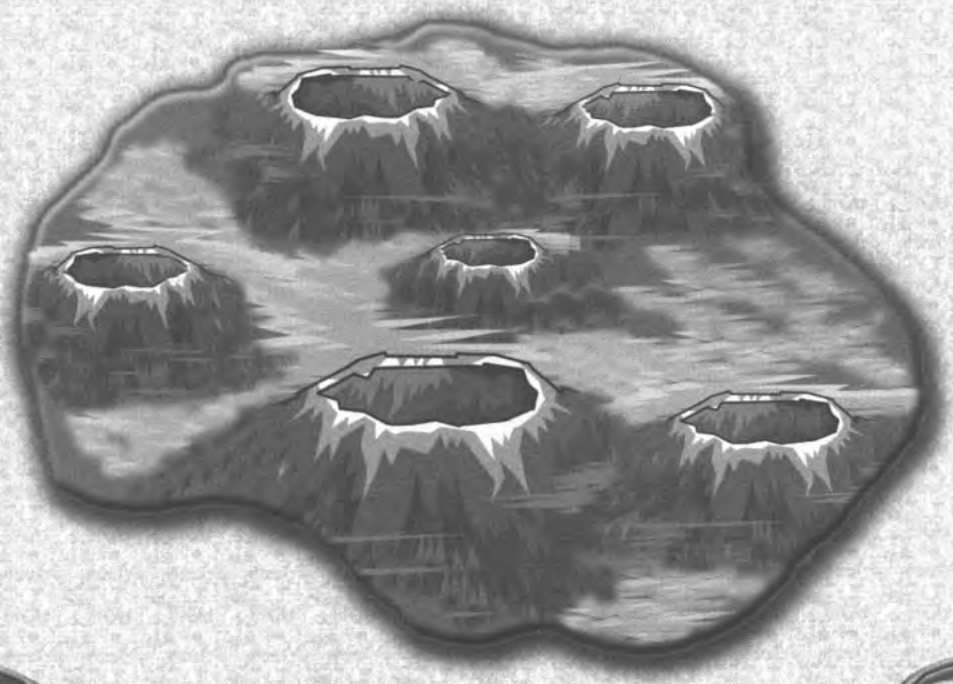


Table 12-4: Muspelheim Temperatures

Roll 1d20 and consult the table below.

Die Roll	*Temperature*
1	80° F
2-3	85° F
4-6	90° F*
7-11	95° F*
11-14	100° F*
15-16	105° F*
17-18	110° F†
19	115° F†
20	120° F†

** All characters (unless they are immune to Heat) must make a Fortitude Saving Throw every hour or suffer 1d4 points of subdual damage. The DC is 15 + 1 for each previous Saving Throw attempt. Characters wearing heavy clothing or armor suffer a -4 Circumstance Penalty to their Saves. Note that a Saving Throw only need be made if the character is engaged in strenuous activity (which includes walking). If he or she is resting or taking it easy, no Saving Throw is necessary.*

† All characters (unless they are immune to Heat) must make a Fortitude Saving Throw every 10 minutes or suffer 1d4 points of subdual damage. The DC is 15 + 1 for each previous Saving Throw attempt. Characters wearing heavy clothing or armor suffer a -4 Circumstance Penalty to their Saves. Note that a Saving Throw only need be made if the character is engaged in strenuous activity (which includes walking). If he or she is resting or taking it easy, no Saving Throw is necessary.

Each volcano erupting that day increases the air temperature by five degrees. If the air temperature exceeds 140°, all characters suffer 1d6 points of damage per minute just from breathing the air. Creatures immune to Heat (or protected by a spell) may operate normally.

suffer 20d6 points of damage per the rules for total immersion in lava from the standard game. A Reflex Save is allowed for half damage.

Note that magma superheats water with which it comes in contact. Thus, a character immersed in water within one mile of an erupting volcano takes 10d6 points of damage (Fortitude Save for half) from the water. If the character is splashed by such water, he or she takes 1d6 points of damage from the scalding.

A volcanic eruption lasts for an hour. Characters within one mile must Save every five rounds as noted above. Characters within five miles must Save every 10 minutes to avoid being hit. Characters within the blast range (on or in the mountain) must Save every round until the cataclysm stops.

Because Muspelheim is so small, it is possible to be within range of more than one erupting volcano. If you would rather not try to figure out precisely where your characters are on the map, the GM can roll a d6 if more than one volcano is erupting. If the number generated corresponds to one of the volcanoes the party is near, they must dodge the output of that blast too.

Note that fire giants and many other creatures native to Muspelheim are immune to heat and fire. Thus, they are perfectly willing to make their homes on or in volcanoes. A party with business with one of these fiends will have to undertake a very dangerous journey, potentially putting themselves on a volcano when it goes off.

Temperature

The first thing one notices upon arrival in Muspelheim is the smell of sulfur that permeates the air. The second thing is the heat. There are no seasons in Muspelheim, and it is always hot. The only question is: how hot?

Air temperature is somewhat affected by how many volcanic eruptions there are that day. The more there are, the hotter it becomes. On a good day (when there are no eruptions) the temperature can run as low as 80° F. On a very bad day (all six volcanoes going) it can reach towards 140°. Table 12-4 gives a temperature range for any given day. Note that the temperature can become hot enough to kill. Gods can leave the

realm via their Plane Travel ability. Mortals may find Muspelheim to be their burial ground.

Denizens

Muspelheim is the land of the fire giants. There are considerably fewer fire giants than there are frost giants, but they are more powerful. With their Fire Immunity, they willingly build their homes into the changing rock of Muspelheim's volcanoes. Few of them build castles since they can be destroyed in a moment's notice.

In addition to fire giants, Muspelheim is populated with other creatures that can stand its intense regular heat. There are few of these, and they are very hardy. Any creature with the Fire Subtype is a suitable denizen. Anything else is "just visiting" or is trapped there. Few creatures not indigenous to the realm survive there long.

Fire Giant Culture

Unlike frost giants, who are always fighting among each other, fire giants get on reasonably well. They live in an environment that is constantly changing, and this has made them philosophical. They hate the gods with a passion that is rivaled only by the Jotuns, but they see change as inevitable. They know that eventually, things will change. When it does, they will be there to make the gods pay for their crimes. In the meantime, they bide their time and do their part to bring about Ragnarok wherever possible.

Fire giants are somewhat disposed to help each other. Despite their fire immunity, they live in a harsh world. Homes are destroyed at a moment's notice and resources are scarce. They discovered a long time ago that they are more successful when they work together. This makes them very dangerous opponents in battle because they cooperate to perfection. They coordinate their efforts extremely well and look for opportunities to capitalize on weaknesses.

However, they don't plan well. This isn't for lack of intelligence. They simply don't see any purpose in it. Because their landscapes can change so quickly, any long-term plans can be dashed in an instant. Thus, planning is a foolish endeavor. There is no way to account for enough variables, in their view, for a plan to be worth making.

This makes it possible to outfox a fire giant. A carefully laid plan that goes off well can easily do a giant in. Still, no race in the Nine Worlds deals better with unexpected changes. When it comes to adapting, the fire giants are the masters. Everyone else views them as chaotic. While that may be true, they turn such things to their advantage. And they are very loyal to one another. Their willingness to defend each other rivals that of any race in the cosmos.

Adventures in Muspelheim

Only a fool goes to Muspelheim on anything other than a quest. The only reason to go there is to get something one needs. Even then, it is well to see if there is another avenue. While all of the Nine Worlds are dangerous in their own right, Muspelheim may be the most deadly. It can be lethal to a mortal, and even the gods are in true danger here. While they cannot be permanently killed in Muspelheim, there are a number of opportunities for them to be killed "temporarily." The deity can recover, but this has a damaging effect on the Fate Points in the campaign. If enough of them are lost, Ragnarok begins. Thus, a trip to Muspelheim can start a chain of events that precipitates the end of the world.

The volcanoes going off regularly present huge challenges for your party. If they are too close when one erupts, they can be decimated in just a few rounds. And they will most certainly have to approach one of them directly, since a trip to Muspelheim almost always involves searching for a fire giant. It is simply one of the most treacherous locations in the Nine Worlds, and an adventure there can go very badly, very quickly. Use this world in your campaign with extreme caution.

Below are some adventure ideas:

- A cursed Magic Item is plaguing the characters. The only way to destroy it is to cast it into a volcano in Muspelheim. Naturally, someone will seek to prevent this.
- A special weapon must be honed in the fires of Muspelheim. It must be brought to the pit of a volcano, heated by a fire elemental that lives within it, and then sharpened to a razor's edge. However, the elemental is not especially disposed to help and someone else wants the

weapon not to be forged (or to steal it for himself or herself).

• A clever fire giant has challenged the gods to bring winter's first snow to his home. If it can be done, he will present them with a great treasure. If not, they must proclaim him superior to them. The catch, of course, is that they must actually bring snow. It cannot melt. And it must be winter's first snow. The giant will do all he can to prevent them from accomplishing the quest.

Nidavellir

While Nifleheim is easily the bleakest of the Nine Worlds, Nidavellir comes in a close second. It is comprised of one giant mountain that stretches into the clouds. Only on a rare clear day can the summit be seen. The mountain is comprised of a reddish clay that gives the whole of it a rusty, worn-out look, and black, acrid smoke pours into it from a thousand ventilation shafts in the side of the mountain that lead to the forges of Dwarf craftsmen. The sky is tinged with orange light against the dark pallor of the thick vapors, giving the massive peak a ghoulish backdrop. Nidavellir conjures images of the worst of 19th-Century factory towns to the modern eye. To those of the 9th and 10th Centuries it seems ugly, oppressive, and desolate.

Its denizens know little of this. Few of them venture forth from their underground homes to even know what the outside looks like. Still fewer leave Nidavellir and smell the rich beauty of other worlds.

Geography

Virtually all activity on the strange plane occurs under the mountain. Indeed, arriving in Nidavellir is only the first step towards consulting with its inhabitants. The gate to the world lies at the foot of the enormous mountain, but entry to the realm of the Dwarfs is higher up. One third of the way up the side of the great peak, there is a large doorway built into the rock face. This aperture is hidden from view, for the Dwarfs do not like visitors. A Spot check at DC 30 or a Detect Secret Doors spell from a character with at least five caster levels is required to notice it.

Once it has been located, it can be opened with a Knock spell or by tracing the rune, Ethel, on the doorway itself. Inside is a small antechamber with the following legend inscribed in the language of the Dwarfs:

ENTER HERE ONLY THOSE WHO ARE WELCOME

The savvy traveler takes pause here because very few individuals are welcome in Nidavellir. In fact, some of its residents aren't particularly welcome. There is no threat explicitly stated in conjunction with the warning, but the magical prowess of the Dwarfs combined with their reputation for beastly personalities causes many to believe that one is implied. Regardless, there is no further barrier to entry past the hidden door, which shuts automatically once it has been penetrated.

There are no lights anywhere within Nidavellir save those of the forges of its residents. The Dwarfs' darkvision suffices for them to see. Once the outer door shuts, visitors are encased in total darkness. They will need a light source if they don't have darkvision themselves.

Beyond the outer door, there is an archway constructed of silver stones. It appears to be the only way out of the antechamber beyond the outer door (which is much more easily opened from the inside: a simple lever activates it). This arch is only five feet high as indeed are all of the apertures in Nidavellir. Those who are taller will have to stoop.

Through the arch is what appears to be a short passageway, but it is difficult to be sure. A light but eerie mist hangs in the air somehow making it hard to determine just how far one has gone. It may be 10 paces. It may be 100. However, the traveler does emerge on the other side, passing through another arch into a perfectly circular room containing a dozen archways (including the one through which the individual has just passed).

Here the magic of Nidavellir really begins to assert itself. It seems as though one has walked through a short tunnel into this room. In fact, one has been teleported here. The archway in the antechamber and each of the 12 in this room are magical portals that whisk the traveler to another part of the realm. Worse, each arch looks exactly like the others. Once one enters

this nexus, it is difficult to determine by which archway one arrived. While one of them does lead back to the antechamber, it is not immediately obvious which one it is. Any character entering this room must make an Intuit Direction Skill check at DC 25 to recognize through which portal he or she entered.

The remaining 11 access the rest of the mountain. Each of them takes the traveler to a completely different part of the underground demesne. The GM should simply roll a d12 when the party enters one of the archways. If the result is a "12," they end up back in the antechamber. Otherwise, they are transported somewhere else.

Getting back to the nexus is not easy. In Nidavellir, nothing is ever straightforward. Each archway leads to a separate small series of tunnels or passages. These have portals of their own. Some are arches like in the nexus. Others are doors or simple openings in the rock. All of them lead to other tunnels throughout the mountain, teleporting travelers just as the arches in the nexus do. However, the passages that can be accessed from the arches in the nexus do not lead directly back to it. While one can get back there, it must be done from other apertures in other caves. The minimum number of "jumps" to return to the nexus is three, and this assumes that the traveler makes the right choice every time. Many visitors who are not familiar with Nidavellir become lost quickly.

All of this makes it difficult to get around the mountain, and so the Dwarfs who live there have taken to creating maps and leaving clues so that if they find themselves in an unfamiliar cavern, they can reorient themselves quickly. Notes are written on walls and various identifying symbols are etched near portals. These marks are not often useful to strangers, though, since there are literally hundreds of them, all written by individuals to whom the code makes unique sense. Few Dwarfs can translate the markings left by anyone else. They simply look for their own notes.

These are precautionary measures, though, for when the residents themselves become lost. Each memorizes the path home (or wherever he might be going) through the portals used most frequently. Many of them have created spells that allow them to navigate less familiar portals. This magic essentially bends the pathway in the gate to take the user somewhere else. This rarely allows a Dwarf to go straight to where he wants, but it frequently cuts down on the length of the journey (that is, the number of jumps required to get there).

Denizens

Dwarfs are not the only creatures that dwell in Nidavellir. There are a host of other monsters and animals that inhabit the realm. Generally speaking, most creatures that have the subterranean climate designation can be found here. Sometimes what looks like an aperture to another part of the mountain is actually the lair of a creature. Lost visitors have been to known to come to a bad end in this manner.

Dwarf Culture

For the most part, Dwarfs are solitary creatures. They don't enjoy the company of others, and they are curmudgeonly when forced to endure it. They don't even care much for other Dwarfs. Each Dwarf is opinionated and an expert at whatever he does. Thus, two Dwarfs rarely agree on anything and become irritated when someone suggests another point of view. In addition, Dwarfs are painfully ugly, and they don't like looking at each other. It's too much of a reminder of their own horrid appearances.

Like most craftsmen, though, Dwarfs are enthralled by their work. They give meticulous attention to everything they make, and they have an eye for detail that no mortal or god can match. A Dwarf can be charmed into something remotely resembling a cheerful personality if he is indulged to go on at length about his work. The truth is, while Dwarfs are solitary and don't like company, they are also lonely because they have no one with whom to share their work. While they hate being interrupted, such an intrusion is more readily forgiven if the offender politely inquires after the Dwarf's work and has an hour or two to listen attentively.

Dwarf Artificers know very well that they have skills others cherish. It is virtually impossible to obtain a good bargain from one of these

masters of magical creation. One can get a fair bargain, but it won't be a favorable one. Moreover, these Dwarfs are perfectly willing to refuse any job for which they can't get the price they want. They know their talents are rare, and they always have something else on which to be working. If a potential client doesn't want to pay up, he or she can find someone else to build whatever it is that he or she wants.

In general, dealing with Dwarfs is painful. They are antisocial to begin with, and they charge exorbitant prices for anything they provide. Hence, they are only consulted when absolutely necessary, which only contributes to the bitterness and resentment they feel towards all other living things.

Adventures in Nidavellir

Though it is certainly not like journeying into Jotunheim or Nifleheim, Nidavellir can be dangerous. The Dwarves that call it home are not especially interested in company and, thus, are not predisposed to be helpful. Moreover, it is very easy to become lost, and that can mean accidentally wandering into the home of a Purple Worm or some other devastating creature. Keep that in mind if you fancy sending your party there.

One of the biggest obstacles your party will face in Nidavellir is getting lost. Because the arches seem to transport them from place to place completely randomly, it can be difficult to get around. There are two ways to handle this. The first is to set it up like a standard dungeon where the PC's go from passageway to passageway in a prescribed order. In other words, no matter which archway they choose, they go to the next set of corridors that you want. It's a simple matter for you to play up the apparent randomness of the experience by emphasizing that arriving on the opposite of the portal deposits the characters in an environment that doesn't seem to fit with the one from which they just came. They might pass through an arch exiting a lava pit only to arrive on the other side in a cool, well-maintained corridor for example.

The other means is to give them a map or a Magic Item that allows them to navigate the mountain with greater ease. Such a device should not be a cure-all for getting directly to where they want to go. It can reduce the amount of fumbling around they need to do, keeping the number of jumps to a minimum.

When crafting corridors and passageways for Nidavellir, remember to keep things ever-changing. The passage to which the PC's jump next should be different from the one in which they are currently standing. Alternate between natural caves and carefully constructed stone hallways. Monsters are unlikely to be found wandering the halls. They have lairs and hunting grounds that the party will accidentally stumble upon.

As much as Nidavellir has a natural randomness, it is also ordered. Within each set of passages, an ecosystem exists, and creatures typically venture beyond these homelands only if they need something they cannot find there. In this way, moving through Nidavellir is actually moving through a series of worlds looking for the one that drew the visitor there in the first place.

A few adventure ideas are included below:

- The characters need a Magic Item or other device created. They travel to Nidavellir to commission it. Alternatively, they may need to know something about an item the dwarf created.
- An important character has become hopelessly lost in Nidavellir. The party has somehow gotten word of this. They must travel to the strange realm to find the character, and then get him or her back out without becoming lost themselves.
- As payment for a Magic Item, a Dwarf Artificer demands that the party solve some problem for him. A dangerous monster has taken up residence somewhere in the mountain that threatens the Dwarf's work. The creature in question should be something that is not easily slain. It's either extremely clever and difficult to catch, or it is wholly sympathetic putting the characters into a quandary.

Nifleheim

Of all the Nine Worlds, Nifleheim is the most dreaded. It is the world of the dead and the demesne of Hel. There are very few living creatures here. Those that are alive are very dangerous because they are either indigenous to this

dark realm, or they have come here from somewhere else and somehow managed to survive. A journey to Nifleheim is fraught with peril, and even the gods go there only when they must.

Geography

Nifleheim is comprised of nine layers. Each is more dangerous and dreadful than the one before it. However, it's important not to think of Nifleheim as a place where sinners are punished like the Christian Hell. Rather, it is simply a dark place that is populated by the dead. It has a sinister reputation because its master is a monster. Lady Hel is one of Loki's three monstrous children and she was banished to Nifleheim and given rule over the dead. At Ragnarok, she will join forces with the giants to destroy the gods. Hence, the evil connotation.

The entrance to Nifleheim is a large gate. No one passes through this without Hel's leave. It is guarded most of the time by Garm. He is named in eddic poetry as "the best of dogs," but the title is not given in a positive sense. Garm is a watchdog of the highest magnitude. He is strong and powerful, and nothing escapes his senses. If an individual does not have permission to enter Nifleheim, Garm will not let them pass. He is a savage fighter and has caused many interlopers to become permanent residents. So long as he is in Nifleheim, he benefits from the Limited Immortality ability of the gods. Thus, he can be defeated but not killed here.

Garm is frequently sent on errands for Hel, though, so he is not always present at the gate. When he has business elsewhere, a pack of 10 worgs replaces him. Garm typically lets gods pass unmolested, but living mortals may not enter without leave. The worgs are savage and will attack anyone who approaches, even the gods.

Once inside, the land is bleak. Nifleheim is constantly in twilight. There is no sun, and the sky is a strange grey color. This casts an eerie grayish light on everything, and it can cause headaches and drowsiness. All characters must make a Fortitude Save at DC 15 when they enter Nifleheim. If they fail, all dice rolls are made with a -2 Circumstance Penalty owing to the effects of the light.

Garm

Size: Large Magical Beast

Hit Dice: 12d10+60

Hit Points: 120

Initiative: +8

Speed: 50 feet

AC: 20 (-1 Size, +4 Dexterity, +6 Natural)

Attacks: Bite +12/+7/+2 (1d8+7)

Face/Reach: 5 feet x 10 feet / 5 feet

Special Attacks: Fear, Trample

Special Qualities: Damage Reduction 15/+2, Enhanced Hearing, Limited Immortality, Linguistics, Scent

Saves: Fortitude +13, Reflex +12, Will +5

Abilities: Str 20, Dex 18, Con 20, Int 12, Wis 12, Charisma 15

Skills: Intimidate +7, Jump +7, Listen +9, Spot +9, Wilderness Lore +7

Feats: Alertness, Blind Fight, Combat Reflexes, Improved Initiative, Track

Alignment: Lawful Evil

Fear (Su): Garm is so terrifying, he projects an aura of Fear 20 feet in every direction. Characters that come into range must make a Will Save at DC 18 or flee as if they were under the effects of a fear spell. Flight lasts for 1d6 rounds.

Nifleheim resembles a bog. There are tall grasses, twisted trees, and unexpected pockets of water. None of these plants are alive, though. They are all dead, and, in addition to the foul stench of marsh gas, the smell of death and decay permeates the landscape. Everything here is rotting in one fashion or another.

Each level leads to the next. Travelers must

Garm (cont.)

Enhanced Hearing (Ex): Garm has very keen ears. He is able to detect sounds with great accuracy. Any creature that comes within 50 feet of him must make a Move Silently Skill check at DC 22. If it is not successful, Garm hears the creature's footsteps. He cannot be surprised and is not caught Flat-footed by the approaching target. He may attempt to surprise the interloper himself.

Limited Immortality (Ex): Garm cannot be permanently killed on Nifleheim. If he is taken below -10 Hit Points, he simply heals at his normal rate until he returns to life.

Linguistics (Ex): Because he guards the land of the dead, Garm can speak the language of anyone who comes there.

Trample (Ex): Owing to his large size, Garm can Trample opponents of Medium Size or smaller. Doing so is a Standard Action and requires him to succeed in a melee attack. Victims may make an Attack of Opportunity when Garm runs them over, but, if they choose to do so, they cannot make a Saving Throw against the damage. Garm deals 2d6+5 points of damage to a Trampled character. If the target chooses not to make an Attack of Opportunity, he or she may make a Reflex Save for half damage.

cross one to find the gate to the next. Each entrance is a large tunnel that leads downward. However, no level is "underground." When leaving one level, the traveler enters a tunnel. He or she emerges from it outdoors again.

The natural danger of the place grows as one travels downward. Living things populate only the first two levels of Nifleheim. Weak and moderately powerful creatures and people live in the first level. Level two is the home of moderate to very powerful living creatures. Levels three and down are populated by undead, demons, devils, and other Outsiders.

The ninth level is known as Niflehel, and this is where Hel has her home. Her palace is a foreboding fortress with numerous wings. Only the vilest creatures live here. These are the people that were horrible in life and can be used as allies in Hel's eventual war with Asgard. Anyone who enters Niflehel without Hel's leave is asking to be destroyed. She doesn't like uninvited guests, and she has many resources to punish those who trespass.

Madness

Nifleheim is not a place for living creatures. Life, when surrounded by so much death, cannot flourish. Characters who stay in Nifleheim for too long go mad, and those that live there are nearly always insane.

A character who spends more than one day in Nifleheim must begin to Save against insanity. This takes the form of a Will Save at DC 12. So long as the Saving Throw is made, the character is fine. Each additional day he or she spends there, the DC of the Save increases by two. Thus, characters who stay three days must make Will Saves at DC 14. Those who stay four days must make a Will Save at DC 16, and so forth.

If the Saving Throw is ever missed, the character acquires a mild insane behavior as though he or she were a Spákona. Consult Table 8-14 to determine the character's malady. For every week the character stays in Nifleheim after going mad, he or she must make a Will Save at DC 15 + x, where "x" is the number of weeks the character has been there. A character who spends more than 10 weeks in Nifleheim need only Save every month at DC 25. The comforting thing about madness is that one gets used to it.

The only way to cure this madness is through the use of a Greater Restoration, Limited Wish, Miracle, or Wish spell. However, the effects cannot be reversed in Nifleheim. The victim must leave the dread realm first. Moreover, these spells only cure one of the character's insane behaviors. If he or she has more than one, each will have to be cured for the character to fully recover.

Denizens

Because it is the land of the dead, Nifleheim has one of the most diverse populations in all the Nine Worlds. Creatures of every sort can be found here, although most of them are dead. What sorts of creatures one can find in Nifleheim is somewhat dependent on which level a character is at the moment. Table 12-5 gives a general description of what sort of creatures can be found at any given level. Some explanations follow.

Dead creatures are those that have passed on. They have been killed or died naturally. However, not just any beast comes to

Table 12-5: Nifleheim Population

The charts below list general trends for population by level. Use this as a guide, but feel free to modify it as you think necessary.

1st Level

Garm
Living creatures of the Lesser Races between 5th and 12th Levels
Dead creatures not of the Lesser Races between 1 and 3 Hit Dice
Undead between 1 and 5 Hit Dice
Worgs

2nd Level

Living creatures of the Lesser Races between 13th and 20th Levels
Living giants who have been exiled or left their native realms
Dead creatures not of the Lesser Races between 4 and 6 Hit Dice
Undead between 6 and 10 Hit Dice

3rd Level

Dead members of the Lesser Races between 1st and 6th Level
Dead creatures not of the Lesser Races between 7 and 9 Hit Dice
Undead between 11 and 14 Hit Dice

4th Leve

Dead members of the Lesser Races between 7th and 10th Level
Dead creatures not of the Lesser Races between 10 and 12 Hit Dice
Demons and Devils of up to 6 Hit Dice

5th Level

Dead members of the Lesser Races between 11th and 14th Levels
Dead creatures not of the Lesser Races between 13 and 15 Hit Dice
Dead Giants
Demons and Devils of up to 9 Hit Dice
Undead between 15 and 17 Hit Dice

6th Level

Dead members of the Lesser Races between 15th and 16th Level
Dead creatures not of the Lesser Races between 16 and 17 Hit Dice
Demons and Devils of up to 11 Hit Dice

7th Level

Dead members of the Lesser Races between 17th and 19th Level
Dead creatures not of the Lesser Races between 18 and 20 Hit Dice
Demons and Devils of up to 13 Hit Dice
Undead between 18 and 19 Hit Dice

8th Level

Dead members of the Lesser Races of 20+ Level
Dead creatures not of the Lesser Races in excess of 20 Hit Dice
Demons and Devils of up to 15 Hit Dice
Undead of 20+ Hit Dice

9th Level

Demons and Devils in excess of 15 Hit Dice
Hel
Anything else she wishes there

Nifleheim after it dies. Most simply cease to exist. The creature must have been one of legend, one that was particularly nasty, caused a great deal of trouble, or otherwise would be remembered. This makes them slightly more dangerous. The sidebar on page 155 discusses dead creatures.

Note too that there is a mix of power in each level. While each level is more dangerous than the one before it, there is enough danger in even the 1st Level to give a party pause. A wide range of creatures can be encountered on each level, and this makes going to Nifleheim without permission or without a plan a very, very bad idea.

Dead Culture

Nifleheim is, in general, a somber place. Most of the people to be found there are unhappy with their lot. It is not the desired resting place of any true Viking, and many lament that they have nothing to do but await the end times where they will clash against those they loved.

Some, however, are in Nifleheim for a purpose. Those who embrace their destiny in Nifleheim are dangerous indeed. They recognize in themselves, the very worst qualities (for why else would they be here?) and embrace them. For them, they have nothing to do until the end of time, so they may as well make the most of what they have. That makes them cruel and sinister, and they mean to win the final battle with the gods who condemned them.

In general, the dead and the living in Nifleheim do not interact well. The living fear the dead (and are probably insane), and the dead are jealous of those who still have life. In fact, those that live their lives in Nifleheim earn the ire of the dead who are trapped there because they are wasting their lives. Conflicts are rare, but they do occur, and they often end badly for the living party.

Adventures in Nifleheim

Adventures set in Nifleheim are almost solely the province of the gods. Only the bravest and the most foolish mortals dare to tread here. Even the gods do not like to make business in Nifleheim since it is populated by those who do not hold their ideals. Nifleheim is, in many ways, a realm of failure, and the gods do not care to associate there.

The gods' business in Nifleheim usually requires them to meet with Hel. Thus, they must move through all nine levels of the gloomy realm. This can take some time, and Hel, wishing to test their mettle, rarely makes the approach easy. She allows the denizens of the realm to do as they will, and she has been known to send minions to challenge visitors if she thinks they are unworthy. This can make for an arduous journey to see her. Mortals who wish to see Hel had best come prepared to fight. She will not see them unless they prove they are absolutely worthy.

Listed below are several adventure ideas for Nifleheim:

- The dead have begun showing up in Midgard and elsewhere. The party must go to Nifleheim (and likely consult with Hel) to learn what is happening and put a stop to it. This story can have severe repercussions for the onset of Ragnarok, since the barriers between life and death are breaking down. Perhaps this is Hel's doing. Perhaps she is innocent and some other creature in her demesne is behind it.

- An important character has been kidnapped and held for ransom in Nifleheim. He or she must be rescued before he or she goes mad from the gloom.

- A dead character holds the key to a mission. Only he or she knows the truth about what really happened many years ago, and without this knowledge, disaster will ensue. The problem is: he or she is in Nifleheim. The party must journey to the dread realm, find him or her, and then somehow convince the character to help.

Svartalfheim

Svartalfheim is the demesne of the dark elves, and it is not at all pleasant like the land of the liosalfar, Alfheim. It is cast in near perpetual darkness. The sun shines only a few hours a day, and even then the thick overgrowth of trees keeps its vernal floor shrouded almost entirely in darkness.

The place is populated as diversely and as wildly as Alfheim, but the creatures found here are evil, chaotic, twisted and dark. There are no friendly beasts in Svartalfheim. The best one can hope

Dead

"Dead" is a template that can be added to any existing creature (hereafter referred to as "the base creature"). Dead creatures retain most of the abilities they had in life, but they do gain some new advantages and restrictions as listed below:

Hit Dice: Increase to d12

Speed: Same as the base creature

AC: Same as base creature

Attacks: A Dead creature has all of the same attacks it had in life. It gains the Slam attack if it did not already have it.

Damage: In addition to any other weapons the creature has, it has the Slam attack. This attack yields damage based on the creature's Size as indicated below

Fine	1
Diminutive	1d2
Tiny	1d3
Small	1d4
Medium	1d6
Large	1d8
Huge	2d6
Gargantuan	2d8
Colossal	4d6

Special Attacks: Dead creatures retain all of the Special Attacks they had in life and gain the following one:

Frightful Howl (Sp): The cry of a Dead creature is a terrible thing to hear. As a Standard Action, the creature can howl, causing a cone of sound to move forward in a straight line from its mouth. The cone is 25 feet wide at its apex and has a range of 50 feet. Those who hear it (that is, are within the cone and able to hear) must make a Will Save or suffer the effects of Fear. The DC for this Save is 10 + half the creature's Hit Dice + its Charisma Bonus.

Special Qualities: Dead creatures retain any Special Qualities they had in life. In addition, they add the following:

Confinement (Su): Dead creatures reside in the Land of the Dead. They cannot leave this demesne unless something happens to break down the laws of the universe. For the most part, Dead creatures cannot leave Nifleheim until Ragnarok. Undead creatures are a different matter — they operate in defiance of the natural order. Dead creatures, on the other hand, are part of the proper order and only exist where they belong. On the other hand, Dead creatures can be Turned or Rebuked by Godi as though they were Undead of the same Hit Dice.

Decay (Ex): Because they are dead and therefore not invested with the vitality of life, Dead creatures lack the resistance to damage living beings have. A Dead creature is destroyed when it reaches 0 Hit Points. Many view this as a release since the dead will help form the armies for Hel during Ragnarok.

Dead (cont.)

Fearless (Ex): Because they are already deceased, Dead creatures have no fear. They are therefore immune to the effects of Fear.

Phase (Sp): A Dead creature can temporarily become incorporeal. While it is in this state, it can be seen, but it cannot be touched. Anything that touches it passes right through. The creature can use this ability to move through hard surfaces if it chooses, but it must deliberately do so.

Many Dead creatures use this power to avoid being hurt. Employing it is a Standard Action, but, if the creature has not yet acted during the round, it can choose to Phase to avoid a blow that would have landed. To do so, it makes a Reflex Save at a DC equal to the Armor Class the attacker would have hit.

The creature can stay Phased for a number of rounds equal to 5 + its Wisdom Bonus. The number of times it can employ this ability per day is 3 + Wisdom Bonus.

Saves: Same as the base creature.

Abilities: Because they are no longer living, Dead creatures have a Constitution score of 0. Hit Points should be adjusted accordingly. All other abilities are the same as what the creature had in life.

Skills: Same as the base creature.

Feats: Same as the base creature.

Climate/Terrain: As appropriate in the Land of the Dead.

Organization: Usually solitary, though some do choose to team up.

Challenge Rating: Same as the base creature.

Treasure: None

Alignment: Same as the base creature, though it is very rare for a Lawful Good character to gain the Dead template (since one must end up in Nifleheim, which indicates a cowardly death).

Advancement: Same as base creature.

to find is a creature in search of food. Many of them have much more malevolent motivations.

Geography

Svartalfheim is given over almost entirely to a thick forest. The trees are dark and murky. The tallest ones reach to the sun that only briefly breaks the night each day. The rest die or become twisted horrible creatures.

The trees are not just alive in Svartalfheim; they are aware and possessed of a malevolent disposition. They do not like any other living thing, and only the hardiest of beings exists among them for long. They will work carefully to thwart trespassers, and they make life among the natives hard and harsh. Unfortunates have been known to be mysteriously strangled in tree branches, tripped by roots that did not seem to be in their paths, and out and out bashed by low-hanging branches that seemed to move with a life of their own. One of the reasons svartalfar live in caves below ground is to avoid dealing with the trees.

Moving through the forest will cause the party to have to deal with the trees. Table 12-6 lists

the various sorts of encounters with which the characters must deal. GM's should check for an encounter every half hour by rolling 1d4. If the result is a "4," nothing happens. Otherwise, an encounter occurs. Characters carrying fire automatically have an encounter every 10 minutes.

In addition to the forest, Svartalfheim is made up of a vast network of tunnels and caves. It is here that the Svartalfar live, away from many of the dangers of the world above. The caverns are no more safe than above ground, though, for visitors. Svartalfar are suspicious at best of those who come to see them, and they are usually hostile. They have had so few good dealings with other races that they expect trouble and return warmly all feelings of malice towards them.

Svartalfar are not the only things that live below ground. There are a host of nasty creatures that prefer to live beneath the earth too, if for no other reason than to avoid the perils above. Few of them have any mercy to spare for interlopers.

The caverns span the entirety of Svartalfheim, and some of them run very deep into the ground. It is here that the svartalfar craft their magical weapons. If one knows the connections well enough, it is possible to travel from one end of the murky realm to the other without ever broaching the surface. Svartalfheim is not a large world; it is barely the size of a human country. This makes it possible for svartalfar to know one another and cooperate effectively.

Weather

Svartalfheim is very murky. It has a wet feeling above ground, much the way it does after a strong rain storm. The sun shines just four hours a day, and almost never through the trees. It is often cold in the forest as a result, but not

Table 12-6: Svartalfheim Encounters

Roll 1d10 on the chart below to determine what sort of encounter occurs.

Die Roll	*Encounter*
1	Character is tripped; Make a Reflex Save at DC 15 or fall and take 1d2 points of damage.
2	Ground suddenly parts. Character must make a Reflex Save at DC 20 or fall into a pit, taking 1d6 points of damage. Character must succeed at a Climb check DC 20 to get out.
3	Character is smacked by a branch for 1d8 points of damage.
4	As above but character must make a Fortitude Save at DC 15 or be poisoned. Take 1d3 points of Constitution Damage.
5	Grove of trees throws fruit at the party. Number of attacks is 3d6. Roll to hit with an attack bonus of +5. Damage is 1d4 per hit. Trees may make up to five attacks per round with no penalty.
6-8	Party encounters a monster (GM determines what kind).
9	Tree explodes. Everyone in a 10-foot radius takes 8d6 points of damage from flying wood. Reflex Save for half. DC is 15.
10	Tree attempts to strangle character. It makes a Grab Attack as a Melee Touch Attack. Attack bonus is +5. If successful, the character is ensnared and choking begins. Tree inflicts 1d3 points of Constitution Damage per round. Character must be cut free to escape. Branches have a Hardness of 3 and 10 Hit Points.

like Jotunheim or the northern reaches of Alfheim. It is simply cold and damp and not very pleasant. It rains regularly, keeping things as moist as possible.

Below ground, things are not much better. The caverns are cold and clammy. Fluorescent lichens provide the only natural illumination. There are frequent puddles and underground lakes. In general, the air is 10° cooler underground than above. Average temperature is around 55° above ground and about 45° below. The temperature does fluctuate based on daily weather conditions, but Svartalfheim doesn't really have seasons, so the temperature is pretty constant.

Denizens

Svartalfheim has a diverse population of wild and "civilized" creatures. As mentioned above, though, few of them are pleasant. Most of them are dark and twisted and seek to do harm to others. It is a cruel and malicious place, and it is made all the more so by the beasts that inhabit it.

Svartalfar are the principle dwellers. A large community of them lives below the forest floor in the caverns. They are encountered occasionally on the surface, but, the fact is, they know only too well that above ground is a nasty place, and they avoid it whenever possible.

Any sort of monster is appropriate for the realm. Any creature with the "underground" designator in its description fits well in the caverns. Those with "forest" or "any temperate" are good for the surface. However, keep in mind that Svartalfheim is a dark place. Only malevolent creatures populate it. There are no Good creatures in the forest and very few Lawful ones. Such a monster would have to be a perverted version that has turned to evil.

Monstrous Spiders are the second-most numerous creature on the world after svartalfar. They make their homes both above and below ground, and they have been known to gather in large communities and work together. They are especially cruel and vicious, delighting in the suffering they inflict on their victims.

Svartalf Culture

After constant abuse by the giants and the gods, svartalfar have a very black disposition. They distrust everyone and everything. Like an abused child, they simply wish to inflict their pain on everyone else.

Their culture is mostly cooperative. They have learned to stick together out of necessity, and they are capable of organizing themselves into grand schemes against the universe. Much like modern game publishers, though, they are frequently unable to see these plans through to fulfillment owing to their obsessive squabbling over petty issues and perceived slights to ego. This is perhaps symptomatic of the plans themselves. Svartalfar constantly seek to destroy or ruin something. With this negative bent, it is perhaps only natural that they ruin their own plots fighting over how best to accomplish them.

They have learned a little too much from the frost giants, who fight like dogs to determine who is best-suited to lead. Unfortunately, like geeks with no skill at sports or women, svartalfar instead gravitate towards trivial intellectual prowess. They demand respect for their knowledge of the universe, the (relative) success of their last scheme, and the biting sarcasm of their wit. When they don't get the respect that they believe they deserve, they punish those around them. However, they do not have the courage to do so directly. Rather, they find ways to hurt the offender behind his or her back. They will steal or break a prized possession, poison his or her friends against the offender, or find a way to torpedo the hated person's plans. There are few svartalf females, and it isn't hard to understand why.

Some say that Svartalfheim used to be more pleasant. It used to be a rich forest, teeming with fair creatures. Svartalfar ruined it, though, through their bickering. They eventually so poisoned the air with their jealousy and their malice that the place itself became malevolent, driving its principal denizens underground. Thus, they ruined their own paradise with their ignorant, ignoble behavior.

Adventures in Svartalfheim

Like Jotunheim, Svartalfheim is a dangerous place. It is populated by many monsters, whose only joy comes from hurting others. Its principle denizens are among the worst sort of people in

the cosmos. Any party traveling to the murky world, whether gods or mortals, should expect trouble.

There are a diverse number of reasons to go to Svartalfheim. Everything from rescuing a kidnapped individual to slaying a monster to purchasing a weapon can be done here. Because svartalfar are frequent pawns of giants, Svartalfheim can be a great place to set part of an adventure. The characters go to the dark world to stop a svartalf plot only to discover that it is a crafty Jotun who is in fact the real culprit

Several adventure ideas for Svartalfheim are listed below:

- The party needs a special weapon. The characters must travel to Svartalfheim to hire a craftsman to make it. Alternatively, the characters may be trying to learn about a weapon that has already been made or steal it before the buyer can get hold of it.
- Horrible creatures have been coming from Svartalfheim to Midgard. The characters must discover what is happening and put a stop to it (and slay a bunch of monsters along the way).
- The svartalfar are in trouble. There is some threat to their entire population, and they actually appeal to the gods for help. Of course, the whole thing is a trap. It is either designed to demonstrate the superiority of svartalf intelligence, or they are pawns of a giant who hopes to lure the gods into trouble.

Vanaheim

This is the home of the Vanir. It is different from Asgard in a number of ways. First, it is considerably larger. It is also wilder, in keeping with the nature-spirit orientation of the Vanir. While it is their home, most Vanir do not spend an inordinate amount of time here. They spend their days at Yggdrasil in judgment and then travel to Asgard to feast in Valhalla.

Geography

Vanaheim is a strange and wild place. It is a patchwork world, where the landscape changes suddenly and without warning. Each god has his or her demesne, and land around it reflects his or her nature orientation. Thus, terrain changes can be radical and unexpected. The topography is always the wildest version of that particular terrain. Forests are thick and tangled. Seas are windy and rough. Mountains are jagged and tall. This is nature's wild heart personified. Travel through Vanaheim is difficult owing to the overgrowth and the untamed nature of the land.

Game masters should feel free to change the land at a moment's notice. The players are walking through a tall prairie and suddenly come across a glacier. They scale it to cross the mountain from which it descends only to discover an ocean. Crossing that, they come to a cliff face, and so on. The changes do not have to make sense. A jungle can border tundra. A lake can rest next to (or even in) a sea. Vanaheim is strange. Emphasize this through its topography.

Weather

The climate of Vanaheim is entirely dependent on the landscape. It switches radically to reflect the kind of land the traveler crosses. Going from the heat of the desert to the cold of high mountains in the space of one step is entirely possible.

No matter where one goes, though, Vanaheim is stormy. There is a 35% chance for a storm every day. Twenty percent of all storms are violent. Thus, roll d%. If the result is "35" or less, there is a storm of the type appropriate to the climate. Roll the dice again. If the result is 20 or less, the storm turns violent. A snowstorm becomes a blizzard. A thunderstorm produces hail and tornadoes. A storm at sea becomes a hurricane.

Like in Jotunheim, storms last for awhile once they get going. The minimum amount of time is three hours. Afterwards, roll 1d3 every hour. When the result comes up "3," the storm ends Otherwise it continues. The maximum amount of time a storm will sustain itself is five days.

Denizens

Vanaheim is populated largely by animals. Some of these are magical in nature. Some of them are wilder or larger versions of their earthly cousins, such as Dire Creatures. None of them, though, are Evil. Again, this is nature at work. The beasts that populate Vanaheim are simply wild. They may kill a character defending their territory or hunting for food, but their inten-

tions are purely motivated by instinct.

GM's may populate Vanaheim with any type of creature so long as it fits the specifications above. It is a magical place where anything can exist so long as it is part of the natural order.

Vanir Culture

Only about half of the Vanir actually make their homes in Vanaheim. The rest live elsewhere, often on Midgard. All of them maintain a residence in Vanaheim so that they may entertain guests, but they only attend it when they have visitors. In fact, travelers have sometimes come to a Vanir's home for an audience only to find their host not present.

The Vanir travel to Yggdrasil during the day, and many of them attend the feast in Valhalla at night. They are slightly less honorable than the Aesir, but the difference is they don't pretend to be otherwise. They are as wild as the land they inhabit and the natural powers they embody. "Fair" is not a concern to them. However, they do not tell their subjects that it is.

Adventures in Vanaheim

Like Asgard, this is largely a jumping-off point for adventures for the gods. The wild terrain makes it a good place to set part of a quest, but mortals may not be suitable for adventure here. Again, for a mortal to gain leave to see a god is an extraordinary thing. If they plan to come to Vanaheim for that purpose, your party will have to engage in some serious persuasion just to get an audience.

Vanaheim is wild enough, though, that even the gods who call it home do not know or understand it all. Thus, a mystery can be uncovered there. A few adventures ideas are presented below:

- The key ingredient for a Magic Item can only be found on Vanaheim. The party must travel there to acquire it. This ingredient is surely found only in an obscure, hard-to-get-to place.
- An evil creature has slipped into Vanaheim and is slaughtering the creatures that live there. The characters must hunt it down before it cuts a large swath of destruction through the world.
- As part of a challenge, the party is called upon to cross Vanaheim from one end to the other without encountering water. This, of course, is a near impossible task and requires a clever character to succeed.

Chapter 13
The Gods

This chapter outlines the most famous gods in the mythos. Game stats are given as well as details on each god's place in the pantheon and any important legends surrounding him or her.

Game stats are only given for the major gods of the mythos and a few of the minor ones. Both Aesir and Vanir are listed here, as in the mythos they intermingle and they will stand together at Ragnarok.

Balder

Balder is the young son of Odin and Frigga. He is often called "The Beautiful" or "The Good." Balder is the least warlike of the Norse deities, but he is not a coward by any means. Sensitive to the needs and feelings of those around him, Balder seems to represent what the Norse strove to be but could not attain. In tune with nature more than the other Aesir, he is given to dreams and omens, though it is often the task of others to interpret them.

Balder's death is one of the key moments in the mythology. It is a cataclysmic event that destroys the gods' order. His mother, Frigga, went to all the things in the universe and obtained from them a promise not to harm Balder. However, she overlooked mistletoe.

The gods made sport of attacking Balder and watching how he could not be harmed. They were all greatly amused by this activity, but Loki was extremely jealous of Balder's stature among the Aesir and his invulnerability. He learned that mistletoe had made no promise of protection, so he fashioned a spear out of it.

One day, when the gods were having fun with Balder, Loki gave the spear to Balder's blind brother, Höd, encouraging him to partake in the fun. Höd did so, and accidentally killed his brother. According to the law, this sort of fratricide had to be punished in kind, but this left Odin in an impossible situation. If he fulfilled the law, he would have to kill his son — more violence on a family member. If he did nothing, the law that the gods had established would be broken. This chaos causes Ragnarok to occur.

There is a lot of Christ imagery associated with Balder, which is probably a direct result of later Christian writers infusing the myths with their ideals. He is the son of the almighty (inasmuch as he is Odin's son), he dies humbly, and he arises after the destruction of the world to start a new age. Once the fires of Ragnarok have burned out, Balder reappears and helps humanity start a new world without the gods.

Odin of course attempted to raise Balder from Nifleheim, sending his son Hermod (messenger of the gods, and Balder's brother) on the great horse Sleipner to plead with Hel. Hel agreed to accept the magic rung Draupnir (symbol of the world's fertility) as Odin's ransom payment, with one condition: every living thing in the world must weep for the slain Balder. Hermod rode the mighty steed to every corner of the Nine Worlds, bearing this message. All creatures shed tears, even the giants and monsters like the Fenris Wolf and Midgard Serpent. Driven into a jealous rage, Loki changed himself into a giantess named Thok. She refused to weep for Balder, citing the many transgressions of the Aesir against the Jotuns, and so he could not leave Nifleheim. He sadly handed Draupnir to his brother for its return to Odin.

Balder is the son god, and also the god of piety and of innocence. His wife is Nanna, the moon goddess. When the mistletoe spear killed Balder, the gods built a funeral pyre from his ship, Hringhorn. Like a good Norse wife Nanna hurled herself into the flames and joined him in Nifleheim. Their son is Forseti, the dispenser of justice.

Balder (10th Level Fighter / 7th Level Vitki)

Size: Medium Aesir (Major God)

Hit Dice: 10d10 + 14d8 + 168

Hit Points: 294

Initiative: +5 (Dexterity)

Speed: 30 feet

AC: 20 (+5 Dexterity, +5 Natural)

Attacks: Shortspear +24/+19/ +14/+9 melee (1d8+9) or +22/+15 ranged (1d8+9) or Longsword +23/+18/+13/+8 melee (1d8+7)

Face/Reach: 5 feet x 5 feet / 5 feet

Special Attacks: None

Special Qualities: Damage Reduction +10/+2, Divinity Points, Fearless, Ignore Damage Reduction +4, Inspire, Invulnerable, Limited Immortality, Linguistics, Plane Travel, Portents, Rapid Healing, Rune-casting, Runic Lore, Signs, Spell Resistance 13

Saves: Fort +16, Ref +10, Will +16

Abilities: Str 24, Dex 20, Con 24, Int 24, Wis 26, Cha 25

Skills: Climb +12, Concentration +12, Craft +12, Decipher Script +14, Diplomacy +14, Gather Information +12, Handle Animal +12, Heal +12, Knowledge (History and Legends) +16, Jump +12, Perform +12, Ride +12, Runecraft +12, Spellcraft +12, Swim +12

Feats: Charge, Cleave, Combat Casting, Combat Reflexes, Improved Critical (Shortspear), Improved Spear-throwing, Leadership, Literacy, Power Attack, Summon Blade, Sunder, Weapon Focus (Shortspear), Weapon Specialization (Shortspear)

Alignment: Lawful Good

Granted Power: Nature's Friend

Invulnerability (Ex): Balder can only be harmed by mistletoe. A weapon made from any other substance does absolutely no damage to him. If he is struck by mistletoe, all of the natural defenses he is accorded by being Aesir (Damage Reduction, etc.) do not help him. A hit by mistletoe is an automatic Critical Hit. Otherwise, it is impossible to kill Balder.

Rune-casting (Sp): Balder knows the following runes: Beorc, Eoh, Eolh, Ger, Ken, Lagu, Man, Nyd, Os, Peord, Rad, Sigil, Tiw, Wyn. He may cast nine runes per day.

Nature's Friend: Balder grants a +4 Bonus to AC for five rounds to Godi who call on him for aid.

Bragi

Bragi is another god who, though brave, is not known as a warrior. He is a Skald of the highest order and often thought to be the originator of that class. The Norse valued heroic tales of mighty deeds in song far more than written words, and the skalds (and thus Bragi) have an important place in the hierarchy of life.

Bragi appears as an older man with a majestic beard. Some stories imply he was raised to godhood because it is his wife, Idun (to whom Bragi is absolutely devoted), who keeps the Golden Apples that preserve the gods' youth. This is a result of him being associated with the human Skald, Bragi Boddason. There is some evidence to suggest that this fine Norse poet was elevated to godhood status in later myths. His counsel is sought (and usually heeded) by all.

Bragi (20th Level Skald)

Size: Medium Aesir (Minor God)

Hit Dice: 20d6 + 5d8 + 150

Hit Points: 235

Initiative: +8 (+4 Dexterity, +4 Improved Initiative)

Speed: 30 feet

AC: 19 (+4 Dexterity, +2 Natural, +2 Leather Armor, +1 Shield)

Attacks: Light Mace +20/+15/+10 melee (1d6+4)

Face/Reach: 5 feet x 5 feet / 5 feet

Special Attacks: Curse, Command-ing Voice, Terror of Legends

Special Qualities: Courage of Words, Damage Reduction 5/+1, Divinity Points, Fearless, Ignore Damage Reduction +2, Inspire, Legendary Verse, Limited Immortality, Linguistics, Magic Shield, Parable, Plane Travel, Rapid Healing, Rune-casting, Spell Resistance 7, Tales of Heroism (x3)

Saves: Fort +12, Ref +16, Will +19

Abilities: Str 18, Dex 18, Con 22, Int 23, Wis 24, Cha 24

Skills: Bluff +16, Craft +16, Decipher Script +20, Diplomacy +16, Gather Information +16, Innuendo +20, Intimidate +16, Knowledge (History and Legends) +18, Perform +24, Read Lips +16, Sense Motive +18, Spot +16, Use Magic Device +16

Feats: Blind Fight, Combat Reflexes, Dodge, High Tolerance, Hurl Shield, Improved Initiative, Literacy, Weapon Focus (Light Mace), Shield-fighting, Weapon-catching

Alignment: Lawful Good

Granted Power: Gift of Gab

Magic Shield: Bragi's shield always returns to his hand. He can use the Hurl Shield and Weapon-catching Feats, and the shield will return to him the round after he has thrown it.

Rune-casting (Sp): Bragi knows the following runes: Daeg, Feoh, Ger, Ken, Os, Tiw. He may cast three runes per day.

Gift of Gab: Bragi is the consummate Skald. He grants a +4 bonus to any single Charisma-based die roll to Godi who plead to him.

Frey (14th Level Ranger / 8th Level Vitki)

Size: Medium Vanir (Major God)

Hit Dice: 14d10 + 15d8 + 165

Hit Points: 299

Initiative: +8 (Dexterity)

Speed: 30 feet

AC: 22 (+8 Dexterity, +3 Natural, +1 Shield)

Attacks: Shortspear +27/+22/+17/+12 melee (1d8+7) or +28/+23/+18/+13 ranged (1d8+7) or longsword +27/+22/+17/+12 (1d8+7)

Face/Reach: 5 feet x 5 feet / 5 feet

Special Attacks: Favored Enemies (Fire Giants, Frost Giants, and Svartalfar), Spell-casting

Special Qualities: Damage Reduction 10/+2, Divinity Points, Inspire, Limited Immortality, Linguistics, Magical Boar, Magical Boat, Plane Travel, Portents, Rapid Healing, Rune-casting, Runic Lore, Signs, Spell Resistance 15, Track

Saves: Fort +17, Ref +18, Will +18

Abilities: Str 24, Dex 26, Con 22, Int 26, Wis 27, Cha 25

Skills: Animal Empathy +14, Climb +10, Concentration +10, Craft +10, Decipher Script +10, Diplomacy +10, Gather Information +10, Handle Animal +14, Heal +14, Hide +10, Intuit Direction +10, Jump +10, Knowledge (Arcana) +14, Knowledge (History and Legends) +10, Knowledge (Nature) +20, Listen +10, Move Silently +10, Perform +10, Ride +10, Runecraft +10, Scry +10, Search +14, Sense Motive +16, Spellcraft +10, Spot +10, Swim +10, Wilderness Lore +20

Feats: Blind-fight, Behead, Berserk, Charge, Hurl Shield, Improved Spear-throwing, Shield-fighting, Summon Blade, Weapon-catching

Alignment: Neutral Good

Granted Power: Shape Weather

Magical Boar: Frey has a pet boar named Gullinborsti ("Golden Bristles"). It is well-named because its hair and bristles are made of gold. It was a gift from the dwarfs (along with Skidbladnir) as part of Loki's recompense for cutting off Sif's hair. Gullinborsti may be slaughtered and eaten and will arise whole the next day so long as one bone remains.

Magical Boat: Frey's boat, Skidbladnir, is treated as a Folding Boat from the standard game.

Rune-casting (Sp): Frey knows the following runes: Beorc, Daeg, Eh, Ethel, Feoh, Ger, Hegal, Ing, Is, Ken, Lagu, Rad, Sigil, Thorn, Tiw, Ur, and Wyn. He may cast nine per day.

Frey (cont.)

Spell-casting (Sp): Frey can cast the following spells automatically:

Entangle	3/Day
Goodberry	1/Day
Plant Growth	3/Day
Speak with Plants	At Will
Tree Shape	3/Day

As a Ranger, he may also cast three 1st Level spells and two 2nd Level spells per day.

Shape Weather: Frey is a patron of prosperous weather. Godi who plead with him gain the ability to affect the weather in their area. This ability works similarly to the Control Weather spell, but the character can only remove unwanted weather conditions; he cannot create them. It is used principally to reverse negative weather patterns (including droughts) by causing a more desirable and beneficial pattern to take hold, at least temporarily.

Frey

Frey is one of the Vanir. He is largely seen as a fertility god. He has dominion over rain and sunshine and, through it, the growth of crops. He is frequently prayed to for prosperity. He is the creator and protector of the liosalfar.

At the conclusion of the Aesir-Vanir War, Frey was given along with his father, Njord, as a hostage. This was an old custom wherein the person was given to the other tribe as a show of good faith. Each side attempted to give their best people to the other so that the good faith would be well understood. A breach of faith gave the other party the right to kill the hostages. In this way, Frey became associated with the Aesir, despite his Vanir nature. He is seen as an important god in the mythos and will fall to the fire giant, Surt, during Ragnarok.

Frey has a number of Magic Items. The most famous are Skidbladnir, his collapsible boat and Gullinborsti, his magical boar. The latter may be killed and eaten and resurrected the next day so long as one bone remains. Both of these items were made by dwarfs.

Freya

Freya is Frey's beautiful sister and the daughter of Njord. She is best known for her sexuality. Freya enjoys erotic poetry and has a reputation of being "free with her charms." Loki accuses her directly in *Lokasenna* (though this is not very special since Loki accuses all of the goddesses of being promiscuous) of having coupled with all of the Aesir and the alfar. He even suggests that she has slept with her brother.

To be sure, she is an object of desire. The giants all seem to want her. The one who offered to build the wall around Asgard demanded her in payment. The giant, Thrym, will only return Thor's stolen hammer in exchange for Freya. Another giant, Hrungnir, boasts that he will kill all the gods except for Freya and Sif, whom he plans to carry off.

Consequently, Freya is seen as the god to which one prays for assistance in matters of love. While her brother is the fertility god, she is the goddess of love.

Freya (20th Level Glytha)

Size: Medium Vanir (Major God)

Hit Dice: 27d8 + 162

Hit Points: 288

Initiative: +8 (Dexterity)

Speed: 30 feet

AC: 22 (+8 Dexterity, +3 Natural, +1 Shield)

Attacks: Shortspear +21/+16/+11 melee (1d8+5) or +24/+19/+14 ranged (1d8+5)

Face/Reach: 5 feet x 5 feet / 5 feet

Special Attacks: Spell-casting, Spirit Combat, Spirit Kill, Touch from Beyond 4

Special Qualities: Chooser of the Slain, Command the *Einheriar*, Damage Reduction 10/+2, Divinity Points, Inspire, Limited Immortality, Linguistics, Magical Necklace, Plane Travel, Rapid Healing, Rune-casting, Speak with Fylgia, Spell Resistance 15, Spirit Projection.

Saves: Fort +12, Ref +14, Will +20

Abilities: Str 21, Dex 27, Con 23, Int 21, Wis 26, Cha 28

Skills: Animal Empathy +12, Concentration +8, Diplomacy +21, Handle Animal +12, Heal +8, Intimidate +8, Intuit Direction +12, Knowledge (Arcana) +12, Knowledge (Nature) +8, Knowledge (Sejdr) +24, Scry +12, Spellcraft +12, Wilderness Lore +8

Feats: Berserk, Leadership, Improved Spear-throwing, Shield-fighting, Spell Penetration, Weapon-catching, Weapon Focus (Shortspear)

Alignment: Neutral Good

Granted Power: Charm

Command the *Einheriar* (Ex): Freya commands half of the einheriar (the other half belong to Odin). She may summon them to do her bidding at any time. When she needs them, she simply calls out and 4d10 of them come to her aid in 1d12 rounds. They cannot assist her, though, when she is in the spirit world. She must be physically on one of the Nine Worlds.

Magical Necklace: Freya's necklace is one of the most beautiful objects in the Nine Worlds and is absolutely priceless. Whenever someone tells a lie in her presence, it glows softly. The range for this ability is 15 feet in any direction.

Frigga

Frigga is Odin's wife and thus the Queen of the Gods. While not a "power behind the throne" *per se*, she is hardly a housewife! Frigga is quite independent and pursues her own agenda. Her marriage with Odin isn't always amicable, and she maintains her own home in Asgard (called Fensalir). She favors birds and wears a shawl of hawk feathers, which allows her to assume the shape of any flying creature. Her favorite mode of travel, though, is her horse, Hofvarpnir, who can ride over water as well as land. She dotes on Balder constantly and is more distrustful of Loki than any of the other gods.

Her most famous moment in the mythos is her

quest to secure Balder's safety by ensuring all living things swear not to harm him. In some versions of the story, she dispatches Hermod to Hel to attempt to retrieve Balder. He fails.

Like Freya, Frigga is known for her promiscuity. She does not cast her net as widely as Freya does, but there was a time early in Odin's career when he was gone for a very long time. Thinking that he was dead, his brothers, Vili and Ve, divided his estate and ruled Asgard

Frigga (15th Level Glytha)

Size: Medium Aesir (Major God)

Hit Dice: 22d8 + 110

Hit Points: 197

Initiative: +6 (Dexterity)

Speed: 30 feet

AC: 22 (+6 Dexterity, +5 Natural, +1 Shield)

Attacks: Shortspear +17/+12/+7 melee (1d6+5) or +18/+11 ranged (1d6+5)

Face/Reach: 5 feet x 5 feet / 5 feet

Special Attacks: Spell-casting, Spirit Combat, Touch from Beyond 3

Special Qualities: Chooser of the Slain, Damage Reduction 10/+2, Divinity Points, Fearless, Ignore Damage Reduction +4, Inspire, Limited Immortality, Linguistics, Magic Cloak, Plane Travel, Rapid Healing, Rune-casting, Speak with Fylgia, Spell Resistance 13, Spirit Projection

Saves: Fort +10, Ref +11, Will +13

Abilities: Str 20, Dex 23, Con 21, Int 22, Wis 18, Cha 21

Skills: Animal Empathy +14, Concentration +13, Craft +13, Diplomacy +14, Handle Animal +13, Intuit Direction +13, Knowledge (Arcana) +13, Knowledge (Sejdr) +13, Scry +13, Spellcraft +13, Wilderness Lore +6

Feats: Berserk, Combat Reflexes, Combat Casting, Hurl Shield, Improved Spear-throwing, Shield-fighting, Weapon-catching, Weapon Focus (Shortspear)

Alignment: Lawful Good

Granted Power: Nature's Bounty

Magic Cloak: Frigga wears a cloak made of falcon feathers. With it, she can transform herself into any flying creature.

Rune-casting (Sp): Frigga knows the following runes: Beorc, Eolh, Ethel, Gyfu, Man, Nyd. She may cast five runes per day.

Spell-casting (Sp): Frigga casts Divine Magic. She may cast four 0-Level, six 1st, six 2nd, five 3rd, five 4th, four 5th, four 6th, two 7th, and one 8th Level spell per day.

Nature's Bounty: Frigga's devotees are able to gain the same cooperation from nature that she does. This power grants one of three functions: the land provides fruit per the Goodberry spell, it provides shelter as the Tiny Hut spell, or it will grant perfectly clean drinking water for up to six people. The Godi specifies which version of the power he would like when making the plea.

Heimdal (20th Level Ranger)

Size: Medium Vanir (Major God)

Hit Dice: 20d10 + 7d8 + 160

Hit Points: 312

Initiative: +12 (+8 Dexterity, +4 Improved Initiative)

Speed: 30 feet

AC: 22 (+8 Dexterity, +3 Natural)

Attacks: Greataxe +29/+24/+19/+14 melee (1d12+8)

Face/Reach: 5 feet x 5 feet / 5 feet

Special Attacks: Favored Enemies (Demons, Devils, Fire Giants, Frost Giants, and Dragons), Spell-casting

Special Qualities: Damage Reduction 10/+2, Divinity Points, Inspire, Limited Immortality, Linguistics, Magical Horn, Plane Travel, Rapid Healing, Rune-casting, Spell Resistance 15, Track

Saves: Fort +20, Ref +14, Will +11

Abilities: Str 26, Dex 26, Con 26, Int 19, Wis 21, Cha 19

Skills: Animal Empathy +12, Climb +12, Concentration +12, Craft +12, Handle Animal +16, Heal +16, Intuit Direction +12, Jump +12, Knowledge (Nature) +16, Listen +12, Ride +12, Search +12, Spot +16, Swim +12, Wilderness Lore +16

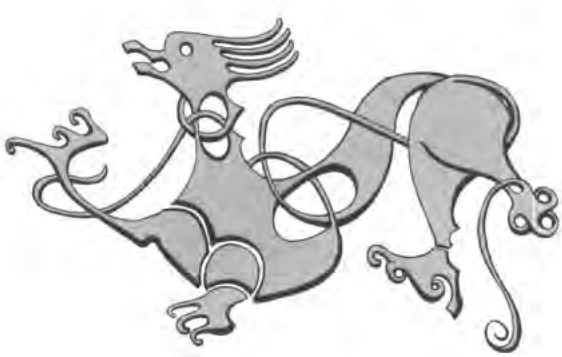
Feats: Behead, Berserk, Charge, Hurl Axe, Improved Initiative, Summon Blade, Weapon Focus (Greataxe)

Alignment: Lawful Good

Granted Power: Sharp Eyes

Magical Horn: Heimdal is the keeper of the legendary Gjallorhorn. He will sound it when Ragnarok begins and Yggdrasil itself will shake and crack when he does so. In the meantime, he can sound a variety of warning notes on it. One note will bring 10-60 *einheriar* to the gate of Bifrost to assist him. They arrive in 1d4 rounds.

together. They shared Frigga among themselves during this time. When Odin returned, they gave him everything (including Frigga) back. There is another story wherein she consorts with a servant. She despoils a statue so that she will be able to cover herself in gold, but then she cannot get rid of the statue itself. She enlists the help (and silence) of a servant by having sex with him. As usual, Loki seems to know of all these things and uses them to demean her publicly.



Heimdal

Heimdal is the supreme guardian and is worshipped on Midgard by those involved in public safety such as town watchmen. He is even more dour and taciturn than most of the Aesir and is often mocked by Loki for such seriousness. A loner by nature, he lives near the Asgardian side of the Rainbow Bridge, a post he rarely leaves. A brave warrior, his might is often the first (and last) thing encountered by any intruder.

He carries the famous horn, Gjallor, on which he blows various notes to alert the others of intrusions. There is one note that will only be blown once: when he calls the gods and heroes to assemble for the Final Battle, Ragnarok

Heimdal is the son of nine sisters. Odin is often cited as his father. It's not exactly clear who his mothers are, but there is some suggestion that they are giants, which would be supported by Odin's frequent dalliances with giants.

His horse, Gulltopp ("Gold-top"), is also quite famous and an eye-catcher for the ladies. He plays only a minor role in most myths, though he is destined to kill (and be killed by) Loki in the Final Battle.

Heimdal's senses are so acute that it's said he can hear wool grow on sheep, hear the grass grow and see 100 miles. He almost never sleeps. Despite his serious nature, he's the only Aesir to have lived among the humans and dallied with mortal women, assuming the name of Rig and fathering the races of hereditary slaves, peasants and jarls by three different (and married) women. Heimdal is quite the ladies' man, aided by his gold teeth.

Heimdal (cont.)

A second note can be used to deafen opponents. The horn puts out a sonic ray in a cone 50 feet across at its base. The sound has a range of 200 feet. All those within the area of effect must make a Fortitude Save at DC 25 or be deafened immediately. Mortal characters must make a second Saving Throw at DC 20 for their hearing to return. Those that recover get 25% of their hearing back in one hour. They have 50% back in four hours. One day later their hearing has returned to 75% of normal, and the rest returns a week later.

Finally, a third note from the horn can put creatures of less than 12 Hit Dice to sleep. The range is the same as if he is blowing the deafening note. All creatures of 11 Hit Dice or less must make a Will Save at DC 20 or fall instantly to sleep. Slumber lasts for 1d6 hours.

Rune-casting (Sp): Heimdal knows the following runes: Eoh, Eolh, Ethel, and Man. He may cast three per day.

Spell-casting (Sp): Heimdal can cast the following spells automatically:

Animal Messenger	3/Day
Calm Animals	3/Day
Speak with Animals	At Will
Summon Nature's Ally I	2/Day
Summon Nature's Ally II	1/Day

As a Ranger, he may also cast four spells of 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and 4th Levels per day.

Sharp Eyes: Heimdal conveys his legendary watchman abilities to his devotees. Godi who pray to him may gain a +20 bonus to any single Listen or Spot check.

Hel (20th Level Magician [Necromancy])

Size: Medium Aesir* (Major God)

Hit Dice: 20d4 + 7d8 + 162

Hit Points: 236

Initiative: +8 (+4 Dexterity, +4 Improved Initiative)

Speed: 30 feet

AC: 19 (+4 Dexterity, +5 Natural)

Attacks: Staff +15/+10 melee (1d6+4)

Face/Reach: 5 feet x 5 feet / 5 feet

Special Attacks: Spell-casting

Special Qualities: Damage Reduction 10/+2, Divinity Points, Fearless, Ignore Damage Reduction +4, Inscribe Runes, Inspire, Limited Immortality, Linguistics, Plane Travel, Rapid Healing, Rune-casting, Spell Resistance 13, Summon Staff

Saves: Fort +12, Ref +10, Will +18

Abilities: Str 18, Dex 18, Con 22, Int 26, Wis 23, Cha 21

Skills: Concentration +26, Craft +16, Decipher Script +26, Intimidate +30, Knowledge (Arcana) +26, Perform +16, Runecraft +24, Scry +32, Spellcraft +26

Feats: Combat Casting, Combat Reflexes, Empower Spell, Enlarge Spell, Extend Spell, Heighten Spell, Improved Initiative, Maximize Spell, Quicken Spell, Silent Spell, Weapon Focus (Staff)

Alignment: Neutral Evil

Granted Power: Wither

Rune-casting (Sp): Hel knows the following runes: Beorc, Eolh, Lagu, Man, Nyd, Os, Peord, and Ur. She may cast five per day.

Spell-casting (Sp): Hel casts Arcane Magic. She may cast four 0-Level, 6+1 1st, 6+1 2nd, 6+1 3rd, 6+1 4th, 5+1 5th, 5+1 6th, 5+1 7th, 4+1 8th, and 3+1 9th Level spells per day. Hel is a necromancer specialist. She may cast one additional necromancy spell per day, and this is indicated by the "+1" designator in each level above. She knows all of the 0-Level spells and the following:

1st: Cause Fear, Chill Touch, Color Spray, Detect Undead, Mage Armor, Magic Missile, Obscuring Mist, Ray of Enfeeblement, Shocking Grasp, Spider Climb, Summon Monster I, True Strike

2nd: Acid Arrow, Blindness/Deafness, Darkness, Flaming Sphere, Fog Cloud, Ghoul Touch, Glitterdust, Scare, See Invisibility, Spectral Hand, Summon Monster II, Summon Swarm

3rd: Clairaudience/Clairvoyance, Fireball, Fly, Gentle Repose, Halt Undead, Haste, Hold Person, Keen Edge, Lightning Bolt, Slow, Summon Monster III, Vampiric Touch

Hel (cont.)

4th: Bestow Curse, Black Tentacles, Contagion, Enervation, Fear, Locate Creature, Polymorph Other, Polymorph Self, Scrying, Summon Monster IV

5th: Animate Dead, Cloudkill, Dominate Person, Dream, Feeblemind, Hold Monster, Magic Jar, Mind Fog, Nightmare, Summon Monster V

6th: Acid Fog, Circle of Death, Disintegrate, Eyebite, Flesh to Stone, Legend Lore, Summon Monster VI, True Seeing

7th: Control Undead, Delayed Blast Fireball, Finger of Death, Greater Scrying, Power Word: Stun, Summon Monster VII

8th: Clone, Incendiary Cloud, Horrid Wilting, Polymorph Any Object, Power Word: Blind, Summon Monster VIII

9th: Energy Drain, Power Word: Kill, Soul Bind, Wail of the Banshee

Wither: Godi who call upon Hel are gifted with a terrible power. The character can inflict 1d6 points of Constitution Damage on the target. The Godi must succeed with a Melee Touch Attack to inflict the damage. The subject must make a Fortitude Save at DC 12 + the Godi's Wisdom Bonus. If it fails, the damage is permanent. Target characters age three years for every point of Constitution Damage regardless of whether the damage is permanent or temporary.

* *Hel is not really an Aesir; she's a monster. However, she's a very human-looking monster, and Odin gave her rule over the dead. She's therefore given Aesir traits here after her father, Loki.*

Hel

Hel is one of the three monstrous children of Loki (the Midgard Serpent and Fenris being the other two). Odin foresaw the trouble that they would make and sought to have all of them restrained. He threw Hel into Nifleheim and gave her dominion over the dead.

Hel is stooping, but she is a fierce fighter and not to be trifled with. Her skin is deep blue on one side and white on the other. During Ragnarok, she sides with the giants and leads an army of the damned to fight the Aesir and the *einheriar*.

While Hel is Loki's daughter, she has no use for her father or the other Aesir, blaming them for the death ofher mother, Gullveig. Gullveig, an evil goddess, belonged to the Vanir and was in most ways the nature-goddess counterpart of Loki. She joined with him in many evil plots, and they became lovers as well. With Gullveig, Loki fathered Hel as well as the Fenris Wolf and the Midgard Serpent.

During the Aesir-Vanir War, Gullveig became incensed with the Aesir for harming her fellow Vanir and went to Asgard to demand they make good the ills they'd done to her people. The Aesir laughed at Gullveig, then took turns throwing spears at her. For good measure, they burned her as well. She might have recovered, this having occured in Asgard rather than Vanaheim. But after the Aesir burned her to death, Loki ate her steaming heart. This kept her from reviving, effectively killing her. It also doubled Loki's evil. Hel hates the Aesir for this act, and even though she will side with Loki at Ragnarok she bears no love for her father.

Idun (16th Level Magician)

Size: Medium Aesir (Minor God)

Hit Dice: 16d4 + 5d8 + 80

Hit Points: 144

Initiative: +5 (Dexterity)

Speed: 30 feet

AC: 17 (+5 Dexterity, +2 Natural)

Attacks: Staff +9/+4 melee (1d6+3)

Face/Reach: 5 feet x 5 feet / 5 feet

Special Attacks: Spell-casting

Special Qualities: Damage Reduction 5/+1, Divinity Points, Fearless, Ignore Damage Reduction +2, Inscribe Runes, Inspire, Limited Immortality, Linguistics, Magic Apple Basket, Plane Travel, Rapid Healing, Rune-casting, Spell Resistance 7, Summon Staff

Saves: Fort +10, Ref +10, Will +13

Abilities: Str 16, Dex 20, Con 20, Int 22, Wis 16, Cha 17

Skills: Concentration +24, Craft +16, Decipher Script +22, Knowledge (Arcana) +24, Heal +20, Perform +22, Scry +22, Spellcraft +23

Feats: Combat Reflexes, Combat Casting, Literacy, Enlarge Spell, Extend Spell, Heighten Spell, Maximize Spell, Quicken Spell, Silent Spell, Weapons Focus (Staff)

Alignment: Lawful Good

Granted Power: Good Health

Magic Apple Basket: Idun carries a basket that provides the golden apples that give the gods immortality. It never runs out, constantly producing the apples. Eating them grants Limited Immortality ability to the gods and keeps them eternally young.

Rune-casting (Sp): Idun knows the following the runes: Beorc, Hegal, Ing, Lagu, Man, Wyn. She may cast three runes per day.

Spell-casting (Sp): Idun casts Arcane Magic. She may cast six 0-Level, six 1st, six 2nd, five 3rd, five 4th, five 5th, five 6th, three 7th, and two 8th Level spells per day. She knows all of the 0-Level spells and the following spells of other levels:

Idun (cont.)

1st: Burning Hands, Change Self, Charm Person, Mage Armor, Magic Missile, Magic Weapon, Mount, Shield, Sleep, True Strike

2nd: Alter Self, Blur, Darkvision, Glitterdust, Invisibility, Magic Mouth, Shatter, Whispering Wind

3rd: Dispel Magic, Flame Arrow, Fireball, Fly, Haste, Hold Person, Lightning Bolt, Slow

4th: Bestow Curse, Fire Shield, Ice Storm, Minor Globe of Invulnerability, Polymorph Self, Remove Curse

5th: Cloudkill, Cone of Cold, Dream, Hold Monster, Mind Fog, Wall of Force

6th: Chain Lightning, Disintegrate, Globe of Invulnerability, Greater Dispelling, Mass Haste, Veil

7th: Delayed Blast Fireball, Forcecage, Power Word: Stun, Spell-turning

8th: Incendiary, Cloud, Power Word: Blind

Good Health: Idun can provide 2d8 temporary Hit Points to her devotees. These last for three rounds and are lost first in combat.

Idun

Idun is the wife of Bragi and an important figure. She is the keeper of the golden apples that allow the gods to remain immortal. Her most famous role in the mythology is when she and the apples are stolen.

Odin and Loki were traveling and trying to cook an ox, but they could not manage to do it. An eagle comes along and tells the gods that it will cook if it can have some of the food. The gods agree, but, when the eagle attempts to take an enormous portion, Loki whacks at it with a stick. The stick adheres both to the eagle and Loki's hand, and the bird flies off with the god in tow. As he is banged around on rocks and trees, Loki finally acquiesces to the bird's demand of Idun and her golden apples.

Without the apples, the gods begin to grow old and gray. They complain and demand that Loki get Idun and her apples back. He agrees and borrows Frigga's falcon-cloak to fly to the eagle's nest. As it happens, the eagle was the giant, Thjazi, in disguise. Loki changes Idun into a nut, and then carries her back. Thjazi pursues in eagle form. When Loki reaches Asgard, the gods build a large fire that singes Thjazi's wings, causing him to crash. Then they proceed to beat him to death. With the golden apples restored, the gods grow young once again.

Idun keeps her apples in a special basket that never seems to be empty. No one is permitted to eat its bounty but the gods. Especially noble *einheriar* are sometimes rewarded with god status by being permitted to eat the apples.

Loki (15th Level Magician / 12th Level Rogue)

Size: Medium Aesir (Major God)

Hit Dice: 15d4 + 12d6 + 7d8 + 170

Hit Points: 279

Initiative: +7 (Dexterity)

Speed: 30 feet

AC: 22 (+7 Dexterity, +5 Natural)

Attacks: Staff +21/+16/+11 melee (1d6+6) or dagger +20/+15/+10 melee (1d4+4) or +23/+18/+13 ranged (1d4+4)

Face/Reach: 5 feet x 5 feet / 5 feet

Special Attacks: Sneak Attack +5d6, Special Ability: Opportunist, Spell-casting

Special Qualities: Damage Reduction 10/+2, Divinity Points, Evasion, Fearless, Ignore Damage Reduction +4, Inscribe Runes, Inspire, Limited Immortality, Linguistics, Plane Travel, Rapid Healing, Rune-casting, Spell Resistance 13, Summon Staff, Uncanny Dodge (Dex Bonus to AC, Can't Be Flanked, +1 Against Traps)

Saves: Fort +16, Ref +12, Will +10

Abilities: Str 19, Dex 24, Con 20, Int 26, Wis 19, Cha 15

Skills: Balance +13, Bluff +13, Concentration +13, Craft +13, Decipher Script +13, Diplomacy +10, Disable Device +10, Disguise +18, Escape Artist +20, Gather Information +13, Hide +14, Innuendo +20, Jump +13, Listen +15, Knowledge (Arcana) +13, Move Silently +13, Open Lock +13, Perform +13, Pick Pocket +13, Read Lips +13, Scry +13, Search +13, Sense Motive +13, Spellcraft +13, Spot +22, Swim +13, Tumble +10

Feats: Alertness, Ambidexterity, Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Expertise, Extend Spell, High Tolerance, Improved Critical, Improved Trip, Literacy, Maximize Spell, Quicken Spell, Run, Weapon Focus (Staff)

Loki

Loki is the most enigmatic figure in the entire mythos. His origins are somewhat muddied. He is "counted among the Aesir" according to the legends, but he does not appear to be wholly of them. His father is a giant, which, in Viking reckoning where lineage is traced to the father, would make him a giant. His mother may have been Aesir, but this shouldn't count in terms of determining lineage. Regardless, he is Odin's blood brother, and that may be why he is "counted among the Aesir."

Loki has accompanied the gods on many adventures, and he has proven himself to be very useful. He is often able to divine solutions when the other gods cannot. However, it is often his actions that set complications in motion. What begins as a straightforward adventure turns difficult as a result of Loki's behavior. For example, he is starved by Geirrod, and therefore agrees to deliver Thor unarmed.

As a trickster figure, he is responsible for some of the worst things in the mythos. He cuts off Sif's hair. He engages in a long struggle with Heimdal over the Brisinga men, which he may have stolen.

He also creates trouble by coupling with the giant Angrboda. This produces three monstrous

children: Hel, Jormungander, and Fenris. Odin knows that all of them will cause trouble, and so he finds ways to confine them. All turn against the gods during Ragnarok.

In most cases, though, Loki is willing to fix things. To appease the gods after cutting off Sif's hair, he hires the dwarfs to create six Magic Items — Sif's golden headpiece, Odin's spear, Gungnir, his ring, Draupnir, Thor's hammer, Mjolnir, Frey's boar, Gullinborsti, and his ship, Skidbladnir. To defeat the giant builder, he transforms himself into a mare and allows himself to be impregnated by the builder's stallion. This produces Odin's horse, Sleipnir. Thus, while Loki makes trouble, he is usually willing to repair it.

He cannot repair his most heinous crime, though. It is he who arranges Balder's death. He learns of Balder's one weakness and puts the fatal spear in Höd's hand. The gods punish him horribly for this. They transform his son Vali into a wolf and then set him upon Loki's other son, Narfi, whom Vali tears to pieces. Loki is then bound to a stone with Narfi's guts, which turn to iron. They set a snake above his head to drip venom on him. His wife, Sigyn, catches the venom in a pot, but when she goes to remove it, she accidentally dumps it on his face. His writhing cause earthquakes.

Eventually, Loki escapes this torment and he goes to Muspelheim. He returns to Asgard piloting a ship full of fire giants, and the last battle begins. He and Heimdal kill each other at the gates of Asgard.

Loki (cont.)

Alignment: Chaotic Good

Granted Power: Guile

Rune-casting (Sp): Loki knows the following runes: Eh, Feoh, Gyfu, Ing, Ken, Rad, and Wyn. He may cast five per day.

Spell-casting (Sp): Loki casts Arcane Magic. He may cast four 0-Level, six 1st, six 2nd, six 3rd, six 4th, five 5th, four 6th, three 7th, and two 8th Level spells per day. He knows all of the 0-Level spells and the following:

1st: Endure Elements, Expeditious Retreat, Feather Fall, Grease, Jump, Magic Missile, Obscuring Mist, Shield, Sleep, True Strike

2nd: Blur, Cat's Grace, Fog Cloud, Glitterdust, Hypnotic Patter, Invisibility, Knock, Locate Object, Mirror Image, Resist Elements

3rd: Blink, Clairaudience/Clairvoyance, Displacement, Flame Arrow, Keen Edge, Protection from Elements, Stinking Cloud, Suggestion

4th: Fire Trap, Locate Creature, Polymorph Other, Polymorph Self, Rainbow Pattern, Solid Fog

5th: Animal Growth, Mind Fog, Nightmare, Secret Chest, Seeming, Sending

6th: Eyebite, Mass Suggestion, Mislead, Veil

7th: Forcecage, Spell Turning

8th: Polymorph Any Object

Guile: Loki is renowned for his intelligence and his trickery. He grants a +4 bonus to Intelligence for five rounds to Godi who plead with him.

Nerthus (12th Level Magician)

Size: Medium Vanir (Minor God)

Hit Dice: 12d4 + 5d8 + 36

Hit Points: 101

Initiative: +4 (Dexterity)

Speed: 30 feet

AC: 15 (+4 Dexterity, +1 Natural)

Attacks: Staff +6/+1 melee (1d6+2)

Face/Reach: 5 feet x 5 feet / 5 feet

Special Attacks: Spell-casting

Special Qualities: Damage Reduction 5/+1, Divinity Points, Inscribe Runes, Inspire, Limited Immortality, Linguistics, Plane Travel, Possession, Rapid Healing, Rune-casting, Spell Resistance 15, Summon Staff

Saves: Fort +6, Ref +7, Will +12

Abilities: Str 16, Dex 19, Con 17, Int 22, Wis 20, Cha 20

Skills: Concentration +13, Craft +13, Handle Animal +17, Heal +23, Knowledge (Arcana) +13, Knowledge (Nature) +24, Perform +13, Scry +13, Spellcraft +13, Wilderness Lore +24

Feats: Empower Spell, Enlarge Spell, Extend Spell, Quicken Spell, Silent Spell, Track

Alignment: Neutral Good

Granted Power: Fruit of the Earth

Possession (Sp): Nerthus is fond of walking the Earth in human form. She likes to see the world through human eyes. She therefore will periodically ritually possess one of her Godi. The priest in question must be a willing recipient, but no devotee would ever refuse such an honor.

Nerthus enters his body through a special ceremony. She then goes out among the world to sample its pleasures. While she does so, the Godi's personality is completely subsumed. His mind sleeps, and, when the possession ends, he has no memory of anything that went on while he carried Nerthus. This can cause trouble for the Godi if Nerthus engages in behavior that might cause offense. She has been known to have sex in the possessed body, potentially leaving the man's seed growing in a woman he doesn't know.

Once she has had enough of the pleasures of the world, she returns to the temple in which she possessed him. A second ritual involving his immersion in water at the hands of slaves releases her from him. Unfortunately for the slaves, they are ritually drowned.

Nerthus only rarely possesses the same Godi twice. She likes a variety of experiences.

Rune-casting (Sp): Nerthus knows the following runes: Beorc, Ethel, Gyfu, Ing, Ken, and Lagu. She may cast one per day.

Nerthus (cont.)

Spell-casting (Sp): Nerthus can cast the following spells automatically:

Light	At Will
Obscuring Mist/Pass without Trace	3/Day
Resist Elements	2/Day
Soften Earth and Stone	3/Day
Wall of Stone	1/Day

As a Magician, she may cast 4 0-Level, six 1st, six 2nd, five 3rd, four 4th, four 5th, and three 6th Level Arcane spells per day. She knows all of the 0-Level spells and the following:

1st: Change Self, Endure Elements, Enlarge, Feather Fall, Hold Portal, Mage Armor, Shocking Grasp, Spider Climb

2nd: Alter Self, Bull's Strength, Cat's Grace, Darkvision, Endurance, Knock, Levitate, Shatter

3rd: Blink, Fireball, Fly, Haste, Protection from Elements, Slow

4th: Mnemonic Enhancer, Polymorph Self, Stoneskin, Wall of Fire

5th: Stone Shape, Transmute Mud to Rock, Transmute Rock to Mud, Wall of Iron

6th: Flesh to Stone, Move Earth

Fruit of the Earth: Godi who appeal to Nerthus can find sustenance for themselves and their comrades. This ability enables the Godi to cast Goodberry, providing enough sustenance for up to six individuals.

Nerthus

Nerthus is a fertility goddess worshipped largely by the Germans. She is seen as an Earth Mother figure and is clearly among the Vanir.

Nerthus is an extremely accessible goddess. She answers prayers frequently, and likes to move among humanity. She does this via possession. She enters one of her priests at a temple and then goes out among the people in his body. There she converses with people, listens to their concerns, and does what she can to aid them. When she has had enough of human company, she goes back to the temple. The priest is washed in a sacred bath by slaves who are ritually drowned. This releases Nerthus from the priest's body.

Njord (15th Level Magician)

Size: Medium Vanir (Major God)

Hit Dice: 15d4 + 7d8 + 60

Hit Points: 178

Initiative: +5 (Dexterity)

Speed: 30 feet

AC: 18 (+5 Dexterity, +3 Natural)

Attacks: Staff +7/+2 melee (1d6+2)

Face/Reach: 5 feet x 5 feet / 5 feet

Special Attacks: Spell-casting

Special Qualities: Damage Reduction 10/+2, Divinity Points, Inscribe Runes, Inspire, Limited Immortality, Linguistics, Plane Travel, Rapid Healing, Rune-casting, Spell Resistance 15, Summon Staff, Winged Boots

Saves: Fort +20, Ref +14, Will +11

Abilities: Str 16, Dex 20, Con 19, Int 25, Wis 24, Cha 27

Skills: Concentration +14, Craft +14, Decipher Script +14, Handle Animal +18, Heal +18, Knowledge (Arcana) +14, Knowledge (Nature) +18, Perform +14, Scry +14, Spellcraft +14, Wilderness Lore +18

Feats: Combat Casting, Empower Spell, Enlarge Spell, Extend Spell, Heighten Spell, Maximize Spell, Quicken Spell, Silent Spell

Alignment: Neutral Good

Granted Power: Water Friendship

Rune-casting (Sp): Njord knows the following runes: Beorc, Eoh, Eolh, Feoh, Hegal, Lagu, Wyn. He may cast three per day.

Spell-casting (Sp): Njord can cast the following spells automatically:

Light	At Will
Obscuring Mist/Pass without Trace	3/Day
Resist Elements	2/Day
Soften Earth and Stone	3/Day
Control Water	1/Day

As a Magician, he may cast 4 0-Level, six 1st, six 2nd, six 3rd, five 4th, five 5th, four 6th, three 7th, and two 8th Level Arcane spells per day. He knows all of the 0-Level spells and the following:

1st: Color Spray, Endure Elements, Feather Fall, Grease, Identify, Obscuring Mist, Mage Armor, Magic Missile, Shield, Shocking Grasp

2nd: Acid Arrow, Alter Self, Darkness, Daylight, Fog Cloud, Hypnotic Pattern, Shatter, Whispering Wind

3rd: Gaseous Form, Gust of Wind, Lightning Bolt, Protection from Elements, Sleet Storm, Stinking Cloud, Water Breathing, Wind Wall

Njord (cont.)

4th: Dimension Door, Ice Storm, Solid Fog, Rainbow Pattern, Scrying, Wall of Ice

5th: Cloudkill, Cone of Cold, Mind Fog, Passwall, Transmute Mud to Rock, Transmute Rock to Mud

6th: Acid Fog, Chain Lightning, Control Water, Control Weather

7th: Prismatic Spray, Spell Turning

8th: Incendiary Cloud

Water Friendship: Water is the ally of Godi who plead with Njord. This granted power conveys one of three effects. In the first, the Godi is able to calm a body of water. Rough waves vanish and storms subside to manageable levels for the crew of a ship (though they do not cease).

Second, the Godi may conjure a stiff wind. This is generally done to propel a boat, particularly when waters are becalmed. The wind blows at a good clip but is by no means stormy.

Finally, the Godi can use the water to feed his companions. By using the granted power in this fashion, he can force fish to leap out of the water onto dry land or into a boat. Enough fish sacrifice themselves to feed six people. The Godi chooses which version of the power he will use when pleading for assistance.

Njord

Njord is, for lack of a better description, the god of the sea. He has dominion over wind and water, and sailors and fishermen pray to him for assistance and calm waters. He is the father of Frey and Freya, and he and his son were exchanged as hostages to end the Aesir-Vanir War.

Otherwise, his most famous appearance in the mythos concerns compensation to the giant Skadi, whose husband was killed by the gods after he had stolen Idun and the Golden Apples. Skadi demanded a new husband as recompense, so they told her she could choose one so long as she chose based only on looking at his legs. She agreed and chose a man with the most beautiful legs, thinking it would be Balder. Instead, she selected Njord. The marriage didn't work out since he preferred to live by the sea and she in the mountains.

It is possible that Njord and Nerthus are the same person. Nerthus is a very old figure and is described by Tacitus in the First Century. They have many of the same qualities, and it is possible that over time the sex of the deity simply became changed. It is also possible that that a "lord and lady" existed with similar names and powers, much like Njord's children, Frey and Freya.

In other accounts Nerthus is Njord's first wife, abandoned when he had to go live among the Aesir. She is sometimes described as his sister as well, and so the marriage would have been voided by the new terms that ended the Aesir-Vanir War and outlawed such things.

While those at sea call on Njord to calm the waters, he is not the personification of the sea like the sea-gods of some peoples. Where Njord brings aid to those at sea, Aegir will surface from his underwater palace to sink ships and ransack their cargoes. Aegir is on friendly terms with the Aesir, serving as their brewer, but he is not one of them. He is a giant, living beneath the waves near Vanaheim. His nine daughters are Heimdall's collective mother.

Romans knew of Njord as well, and in some Roman tales he is their ancient god Saturn (Chronos to the Greeks), the father of Jupiter/Zeus. In these tales, he was not slain by his children, but rather fled from them and assumed a new identity and way of life.

Odin (12th Level Magician / 10th Level Fighter / 5th Level Glytha)*

Size: Medium Aesir (Major God)

Hit Dice: 12d4 + 10d10 +12d8 + 243

Hit Points: 379

Initiative: +7 (Dexterity)

Speed: 30 feet

AC: 26 (+7 Dexterity, +5 Natural, +3 Studded Leather Armor, +1 Shield)

Attacks: Magical Shortspear +32/+27/+22/+17 melee (1d6+13) or +31/+26/+21/+16 ranged (1d6+13) or Longsword +28/+23/+18/+13 melee (1d8+8)

Face/Reach: 5 feet x 5 feet / 5 feet

Special Attacks: Spell-casting, Spirit Combat, Touch from Beyond 1

Special Qualities: Chooser of the Slain, Damage Reduction 10/+2, Divinity Points, Fearless, Ignore Damage Reduction +4, Inspire, Limited Immortality, Linguistics, Magical Ring, Magical Spear, Magical Understanding, Plane Travel, Rapid Healing, Rune-casting, Speak with *Fylgia*, Spell Resistance 13, Spirit Projection

Saves: Fort +21, Ref +15, Will +22

Abilities: Str 27, Dex 24, Con 28, Int 25, Wis 25, Cha 26

Skills: Animal Empathy +16, Climb +16, Concentration +16, Craft +16, Diplomacy +16, Handle Animal +16, Intimidate +24, Intuit Direction +16, Jump +16, Knowledge (Arcana) +24, Knowledge (Sejdr) +16, Perform +16, Ride +24, Scry +16, Spellcraft +20, Swim +16

Feats: Berserk, Behead, Blind-fight, Cleave, Combat Casting, Combat Reflexes, Enlarge Spell, Extend Spell, Great Cleave, Hurl Shield, Leadership, Literacy, Maximize Spell, Improved Spear-throwing, Power Attack, Shield-fighting, Weapon-catching, Weapon Focus (Shortspear), Weapon Specialization (Shortspear)

Alignment: Neutral Good

Granted Power: Foresight

Magical Ring: Odin's ring, Draupnir, drips gold, forming a perfect copy of itself. He gives these rings as gifts to those he favors. They are worth 5,000 gold each, but none of the copies are capable of reproducing themselves.

Magical Spear: Odin's spear, Grungnir, is a +3 magical weapon.

Magical Understanding (Ex): Because he knows all of the runes and understands them perfectly, Odin does not need a staff to cast magic.

Rune-casting (Sp): Odin knows all of the runes. He may cast 10 per day.

Spell-casting (Sp): Odin casts Arcane Magic. He may cast four 0-Level, six 1st, six 2nd, six 3rd, four 4th, four 5th, and three 6th Level spells per day. He knows all of the 0-Level spells and the following:

Odin (cont.)

1st: Change Self, Endure Elements, Enlarge, Jump, Magic Missile, Obscuring Mist, Reduce, Sleep

2nd: Alter Self, Bull's Strength, Cat's Grace, Detect Thoughts, Fog Cloud, Hypnotic Pattern, Resist Elements, Scare

3rd: Dispel Magic, Haste, Hold Person, Keen Edge, Protection from Elements, Sleet Storm, Slow, Stinking Cloud

4th: Arcane Eye, Bestow Curse, Hallucinatory Terrain, Polymorph Self, Shout

5th: Dream, Hold Monster, Mind Fog, Passwall

6th: Move Earth, True Seeing

Foresight: Godi praying to Odin receive the ability to see a little ahead in time. For five rounds they gain a +4 bonus to attack rolls, damage rolls, or AC. The Godi applies the bonus as he likes and may change it every round as a Free Action.

** Odin is the only male capable of practicing sejdr. His vast understanding of the universe allows him to grasp this strange, feminine art.*

Odin

Odin, called the All-Father and the Gray Wanderer, is the supreme god of the mythos. He is often away from Asgard on subtle adventures. Unlike Thor, who is the proverbial bull in a china shop, Odin prefers to work behind the scenes in most cases. His wisdom is great but not without gaps. There is much he does not understand, and his quest for knowledge is without equal. He is thus respected and worshipped by scholars as much as kings. He is also very skilled in the art of magic, and magicians of all varieties seek his blessings.

Odin is the son of Bur, who was fathered by Buri, who was created when Audhumla, the proto-cow, licked him out of salt. His mother was the giant, Bestla. Odin and his brothers, Vili and Ve, killed Ymir and created the universe out of his body. This crime set up the struggle between the giants and the gods that will eventually lead to Ragnarok.

Odin sacrificed one of his eyes for wisdom. He hung for nine nights on the world-tree, Yggdrasil, and won knowledge of the runes (at the cost of his eye) as a result. He is the father of many of the other Aesir, notably Balder, Thor, and Vidar. He makes a blood-brother pact with Loki, perhaps to prevent future trouble. If this is his purpose, though, it fails.

He seems to travel under a different name in each of his adventures, and he often travels in disguise. Odin won many treasures for the gods (most of which were stolen from the giants), such as the Mead of Poetry. In fact, Odin is seen as a great poet, and earthly Skalds seek his blessing in addition to that of Bragi.

Odin commands half the *einheriar*. The other half belong to Freya. He will command them at Ragnarok, leading them into battle. Unfortunately, he will be slain by Fenris, forcing Vidar to avenge him.

He keeps many useful pets. Two wolves, Freke and Gere (literally, "Greedy" and "Ravenous"), sit by his throne and often accompany him on journeys. His ravens, Hugin and Munin ("Thought" and "Memory"), fly the universe bringing messages and helping him keep track of things. His steed is Sleipnir, a grayish-white, eight-legged horse that can fly.

Sif (12th Level Glytha)

Size: Medium Aesir (Minor God)

Hit Dice: 17d8 + 68

Hit Points: 139

Initiative: +3 (Dexterity)

Speed: 30 feet

AC: 15 (+3 Dexterity, +2 Natural)

Attacks: Dagger +14/+9 melee (1d4+4) or +13/+8 ranged (1d4+4)

Face/Reach: 5 feet x 5 feet / 5 feet

Special Attacks: Spirit Combat, Touch from Beyond 2

Special Qualities: Chooser of the Slain, Damage Reduction 5/+1, Divinity Points, Fearless, Ignore Damage Reduction +2, Inspire, Limited Immortality, Linguistics, Magic Headpiece, Plane Travel, Rapid Healing, Rune-casting, Speak with *Fylgia*, Spell-casting, Spell Resistance 7, Spirit Projection

Saves: Fort +8, Ref +7, Will +14

Abilities: Str 18, Dex 17, Con 18, Int 20, Wis 22, Cha 23

Skills: Animal Empathy +12, Concentration +12, Craft +8, Diplomacy +9, Handle Animal +12, Intuit Direction +12, Knowledge (Arcana) +8, Knowledge (Sejdr) +12, Scry +10, Spellcraft +10

Feats: Combat Reflexes, Combat Casting, Dodge, Extend Spell, Maximize Spell, Summon Blade, Weapon Focus (Dagger)

Alignment: Lawful Good

Granted Power: Golden Locks

Magic Headpiece: Sif has a headpiece that allows her to grow golden hair. It was given to her by Loki as recompense for his cutting off her hair. Anyone who puts it on will grow hair made of gold in 1d6 + 7 days. The hair may be cut and is worth 500 gold.

Rune-casting (Sp): Sif knows the following the runes: Is, Lagu, Rad, Sigil, Thorn. She may cast three runes per day.

Spell-casting (Sp): Sif casts Divine Magic. She may cast four 0-Level, six 1st, six 2nd, five 3rd, five 4th, five 5th, and five 6th Level spells per day.

Golden Locks: Sif's golden hair makes her very beautiful. She grants a +2 to bonus to Charisma for two rounds.

Sif

Sif is Thor's wife and the mother of Magni and Modi, who will survive Ragnarok and help Balder build a new world for humanity. She is important to the mythology in that she is a causal force behind the gods' getting some precious and important tools.

Loki, playing one of his pranks, cut off Sif's hair. This infuriated Thor, a poor thing to do at best. Loki managed to avoid punishment by convincing the dwarfs to make a headpiece for her that would grow into golden hair. He also managed to convince them to make Frey's ship, Skidbladnir, and Odin's spear, Gungnir. Loki

then bet the dwarf, Brokk, that his brother, Eitri, couldn't make three equally good items. The two brothers took the bet and created Odin's ring, Draupnir, Frey's boar, Gullinborsti, and Thor's hammer, Mjollnir. Thus, by cutting off Sif's hair, Loki did the gods a favor. They were much richer for the crime.

Thor (20th Level Fighter)

Size: Medium Aesir (Major God)

Hit Dice: 20d10 + 7d8 + 180

Hit Points: 349

Initiative: +12 (+8 Dexterity, +4 Improved Initiative)

Speed: 30 feet

AC: 23 (+8 Dexterity, +5 Natural)

Attacks: Magical Hammer +34/+29/+24/+19 melee (1d6+15) or +32/+27/+22/+17 ranged (1d6+15)

Face/Reach: 5 feet x 5 feet / 5 feet

Special Attacks: Lightning Bolts from Hammer (see below)

Special Qualities: Damage Reduction 10/+2, Divinity Points, Fearless, Ignore Damage Reduction +4, Inspire, Limited Immortality, Linguistics, Magical Belt, Magical Gloves, Magical Hammer, Plane Travel, Rapid Healing, Rune-casting, Spell Resistance 13

Saves: Fort +21, Ref +14, Will +10

Abilities: Str 30, Dex 26, Con 28, Int 14, Wis 18, Cha 20

Skills: Climb +18, Craft +10, Handle Animal +15, Jump +16, Ride +15, Swim +18

Feats: Berserk, Blind-fight, Combat Reflexes, Charge, Cleave, Dodge, Great Cleave, High Tolerance, Improved Bull Rush, Improved Critical, Improved Initiative, Improved Unarmed Strike, Mobility, Power Attack, Quick Draw, Run, Spring Attack, Summon Blade, Sunder, Weapon Focus (Hammer), Weapon Specialization (Hammer)

Alignment: Neutral Good

Granted Power: Great Strength

Magical Belt: Thor's belt, Meginharder, adds two points to his Strength. While wearing it, he can hurl Mjolnir with a Range Increment of 30 feet.

Magical Gloves: Thor's gloves, Jarn Greiper, add two points to his Dexterity. As long as he is wearing them, Mjolnir will automatically return to him one round after he throws it.

Magical Hammer: Thor's Hammer, Mjolnir, is a wondrous item. It is a +3 magical weapon, and it can hurl lightning bolts. These strikes deal 8d6 points of damage (Reflex Save for half, DC 13). The hammer can throw three of them per day.

Rune-casting (Sp): Thor knows the following runes: Daeg and Thorn. He may cast five per day.

Great Strength: Those who plead with Thor gain a +4 bonus to their Strength scores for five rounds.

Thor

The son of Odin and Jord is the most famous adventurer in the mythos and the Aesir's greatest giant-killer. In fact, most of his exploits center around the killing of giants, and his greatest foe is the biggest giant of all: Jormungander, the Midgard Serpent.

He cuts quite a figure with his massive frame and flaming red hair. Thor's life is one adventure after another, and his exploits are well known to all. He constantly hunts monsters both to prove his mettle and to protect humanity. His cult is actually more widespread on Midgard than that of Odin. Thor is the god of choice for the commoner, while nobles and their ilk favor his father. His devotees wear amulets in the shape of his magic warhammer, Mjolnir. This is one the few incidents of mortals adorning themselves with holy symbols associated with the Norse gods.

Thor is not the brightest of the gods. He is frequently outwitted by giants and others. He does not seem to understand why he cannot outwrestle an old woman named Old Age (she is, in fact, old age), he is stunned when he cannot lift a cat (it is actually the Midgard Serpent). Magic befuddles him entirely, and he does not like it.

He is wise enough, though, to rely on his strength, which is by far his greatest asset. When he is obviously superior to an opponent, he prefers to wield a sturdy battleaxe rather than his traditional hammer. The other gods depend on his prowess a bit too much sometimes. When Thor cannot overcome some obstacle, it is often the cause for great debate and no small panic.

He is fairly well equipped with magic, mainly of Dwarf manufacture. He often flies through the air in a mighty war chariot pulled by the two great boars, Tanngrisner and Tanngjost. Both can be eaten by Thor (and any companions) and will arise the next day whole as long as one bone remains. He also has a magical belt, Meginharder, which makes him stronger, and gloves, Jarn Greiper, that enhance his battle prowess. And his hammer is legend. Aside from being a great weapon, it can hurl lightning bolts. Like most of the gods, Thor will die at Ragnarok. He finally defeats Jormungander, killing the great serpent, but he succumbs to the beast's poisonous breath.

Tyr

Noble Tyr has two roles in the mythos. He is the god of law and of war. His word is his honor, and he expects the same of everyone else. Thus, he is the patron of strict law to the letter. Compassion (or even justice, perhaps) does not enter into consideration. The end never justifies the means with him.

As the God of War, he drills the heroes and even the gods in the finer points of martial combat. It is Tyr who will lead the army of Asgard into the Final Battle after Odin falls to Fenris.

Tyr's most prominent part in the myth involves the Fenris Wolf and demonstrates his obsession with the letter of the law. The gods became concerned when they learned that Loki's three monstrous children were being raised in Jotunheim. They summoned the three before them for judgment. Odin threw Jormungander into the sea where it continued to grow until it encircled the entire world. He threw Hel into Nifleheim and gave her dominion over the dead. For some reason, though, he chose to keep Fenris with the Aesir.

Of all the gods, only Tyr had the courage to feed the beast. Fenris grew very large in a short period of time, and the gods became concerned. Odin reconsidered his earlier leniency.

To protect themselves, the gods decided to bind the wolf. They cast great chains on him and got him to consent by challenging him to break them. Much to the gods' dismay, he universally succeeded. They therefore hired a dwarf to create a special fetter — Gleipnir. This bond was made of cat noise, woman beard, mountain roots, bear sinews, fish breath, and bird spittle. They then invited the wolf to allow himself to be bound again.

Fenris was immediately suspicious. The chain appeared silken, and there was clearly no honor to be gained in breaking it. Smelling a trap, Fenris asked for some insurance. He demanded that one of the gods place a hand in his jaws.

No one wanted to volunteer, so Tyr stepped forward and offered his hand. When the wolf was bound, he found he could not escape. The bonds only tightened. Infuriated, he bit off Tyr's hand at the wrist.

Later, he helped Thor steal a great cauldron for brewing beer. Tyr knew where it was located and how to gain it. Thor carried it off. During Ragnarok, Tyr and Garm will kill each other.

Tyr is unusual among the Aesir, for as befits the god of justice, he is the legitimate son of Odin and Frigga. He has no spouse in the mythos.

Tyr (15th Level Fighter)

Size: Medium Aesir (Major God)

Hit Dice: 15d10 + 7d8 + 154

Hit Points: 263

Initiative: +10 (+6 Dexterity, +4 Improved Initiative)

Speed: 30 feet

AC: 25 (+5 Dexterity, +5 Natural, +5 Studded Leather)

Attacks: Battle Axe +23/+18/+13 melee (1d8+9) or Longsword +22/+17/+12 melee (1d8+7)

Face/Reach: 5 feet x 5 feet / 5 feet

Special Attacks: None

Special Qualities: Boots of Speed, Damage Reduction 10/+2, Divinity Points, Fearless, Ignore Damage Reduction +4, Inspire, Limited Immortality, Linguistics, Plane Travel, Rapid Healing, Rune-casting, Spell Resistance 13

Saves: Fort +16, Ref +11, Will +11

Abilities: Str 26, Dex 23, Con 25, Int 17, Wis 22, Cha 19

Skills: Climb +15, Craft +15, Handle Animal +15, Jump +15, Ride +15, Swim +15

Feats: Berserk, Blind-fight, Charge, Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Hurl Axe, Improved Critical, Improved Initiative, Improved Unarmed Strike, Literacy, Mobility, Quick Draw, Spring Attack, Summon Blade, Weapon Focus (Battleaxe), Weapon Specialization (Battleaxe)

Alignment: Lawful Good

Granted Power: Judgment

Rune-casting (Sp): Tyr knows the following runes: Ger, Os, and Tiw. He may cast five per day.

Judgment: A Godi who pleads with Tyr can pass judgment on his foes. By cursing them, they suffer a -4 Morale Penalty to all dice rolls for five rounds. The Godi affects a number of Hit Dice equal to 10 + his Charisma Bonus.

Uller (14th Level Ranger)

Size: Medium Vanir (Minor God)

Hit Dice: 14d10 + 5d8 + 116

Hit Points: 210

Initiative: +12 (+8 Dexterity, +4 Improved Initiative)

Speed: 30 feet

AC: 19 (+8 Dexterity, +1 Natural)

Attacks: Shortbow +26/+21/+16 ranged (1d6+6) or longsword +20/+15/+10 melee (1d8+6)

Face/Reach: 5 feet x 5 feet / 5 feet

Special Attacks: Favored Enemies (Bears, Boars, and Dragons), Spell-casting

Special Qualities: Damage Reduction 5/+1, Divinity Points, Inspire, Limited Immortality, Linguistics, Magical Bow. Plane Travel. Rapid Healing, Rune-casting, Spell Resistance 15, Track

Saves: Fort +15, Ref +12, Will +12

Abilities: Str 23, Dex 26, Con 22, Int 21, Wis 26, Cha 23

Skills: Animal Empathy +8, Climb +8, Concentration +6, Handle Animal +10, Heal +12, Hide +10, Intuit Direction +8, Jump +8, Knowledge (Nature) +16, Listen +12, Move Silently +15, Ride +8, Search +14, Spot +12, Swim +8, Wilderness Lore +14

Feats: Behead, Berserk, Improved Critical (Shortbow), Improved Initiative, Weapon Focus (Shortbow)

Alignment: Lawful Good

Granted Power: Deadeye

Magical Bow: Uller's bow grants him a +3 bonus to attack rolls. Because it is made of thick yew wood, he may add his Strength Bonus to damage when he hits.

Rune-casting (Sp): Uller knows the following runes: Eh, Eoh, Ger, Nyd and Thorn. He may cast one per day.

Spell-casting (Sp): Uller can cast the following spells automatically:

Animal Messenger	3/Day
Calm Animals	3/Day
Speak with Animals	At Will
Summon Nature's Ally I	2/Day
Summon Nature's Ally II	1/Day

As a Ranger, he may cast four 1st, two 2nd, and two 3rd Level spells per day.

Deadeye: Uller conveys his keen hunter's eye to his devotees. Godi who appeal to him may gain a +2 bonus to ranged attacks for three rounds.

Uller

Uller is the son of the goddess, Sif, from a liaison before she married Thor. The father is not named, but he appears to be Vanir. Thor, being a lusty fellow himself, bears no resentment towards the previous tryst and gets along quite well with his stepson.

Uller is the God of Hunters and Archers, and he spends much of his time outdoors, being uncomfortable when confined in any way. He is a great skier and moves with great speed in this fashion. Winter is his favorite season by far. He is held in high esteem among the gods, and once ruled 10 years in Odin's place.

Vidar (17th Level Fighter)

Size: Medium Aesir (Major God)

Hit Dice: 17d10 + 7d8 + 102

Hit Points: 218

Initiative: +11 (+7 Dexterity, +4 Improved Initiative)

Speed: 30 feet

AC: 28 (+7 Dexterity, +5 Natural, +5 Studded Leather, +1 Shield)

Attacks: Unarmed Strike +26/+21/+16/+11 (1d3+10 subdual) or Battleaxe +25/+20/+15/+10 melee (1d8+8)

Face/Reach: 5 feet x 5 feet / 5 feet

Special Attacks: None

Special Qualities: Damage Reduction 10/+2, Divinity Points, Fearless, Ignore Damage Reduction +4, Inspire, Limited Immortality, Linguistics, Magical Shoe, Plane Travel, Rapid Healing, Rune-casting, Spell Resistance 13

Saves: Fort +16, Ref +12, Will +10

Abilities: Str 27, Dex 24, Con 23, Int 19, Wis 20, Cha 21

Skills: Climb +20, Craft +20, Handle Animal +20, Jump +20, Ride +20, Swim +20

Feats: Berserk, Blind-fight, Charge, Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Hurl Axe, Improved Critical, Improved Initiative, Improved Unarmed Strike, Literacy, Mobility, Quick Draw, Spring Attack, Summon Blade, Weapon Focus (Unarmed Strike), Weapon Specialization (Unarmed Strike)

Alignment: Lawful Good

Granted Power: Retribution

Magical Shoe: Vidar's shoe is capable of pinning opponents to the ground. To use it, he must make a successful Melee Touch Attack. If successful, the target gets a Reflex Save at DC 17 to resist the effect. If the Save fails, the target is pinned to the spot and cannot move until Vidar removes his foot. Additionally, the victim suffers a -4 Circumstance Penalty to attacks rolls and AC.

Rune-casting (Sp): Vidar knows the following runes: Beorc, Eoh, Eolh, and Is. He may cast five per day.

Retribution: A Godi who pleads with Vidar is a fearsome opponent. For five rounds, his opponents take as much damage as they deal to him.

Vidar

Vidar is another of Odin's many sons. He is known as "the Silent God" for reasons that are not explicitly clear in the legends. It may be that he is not given to boisterous behavior or bragging about his exploits, which are considerable.

Vidar never gets mad. He just gets even. His role in the mythology seems to be as a bringer of vengeance. He is easily the second-most renowned giant-slayer among the Aesir. He specializes in unarmed combat and wears a magical shoe that, when he steps on an opponent's foot, pins the foe to the spot, preventing him from retreating. Once he has them pinned, Vidar pummels his enemies to death. He uses this shoe to kill Fenris at Ragnarok. After the beast swallows Odin, Vidar steps on his lower jaw with his shoe, pinning it to the ground. He then grabs the wolf's upper jaw and uses the leverage to tear Fenris in two.

Vidar is one of the gods who survives Ragnarok. He and his brothers, Vali, Höd, and Balder will be present after the war ends along with Thor's sons, Magni and Modi.

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